REFLECTIONS

UPON

Accuracy *of* Style.

CONTAINING

The Chief Rules to be obſerv'd for obtaining an Accurate Style.
Of the too frequent Uſe of *Antitheſes*.
Of the Uſe of *Metaphors*.
Of Affectation in Style.
Of Flaſhy Styles.
Of the Uſe of Foreign Words.
Of the Laconick Style.
Of the Long Style.
Of Novelty of Style.
Of Poetical Expreſſions uſed in Proſe.
Of the Uſe of Obſolete Words.
Rapin's Rules of Style.
Of Obſcurity in Writing.
On Harmony of Sound.
French Writers not a Rule in other Languages.
Vogue not always a ſure Proof of a good Writer.
Of the Beauties and Blemiſhes in the Style of the late famous Mr. COLLIER.
Of that Gentleman's Oddneſs of Expreſſion, Metaphors, *&c.*

With Brief OBSERVATIONS interſpers'd thro' the Whole, on

DENHAM,	BOILEAU,	M. du PORT ROYAL,
DODWELL,	BOUHOURS,	De St. EVREMONT,
DRYDEN,	TESAURO,	QUINTILIAN,
COWLEY,	TASSO,	LUCAN,
BALZAC,	VOITURE,	VIRGIL, *&c.*

And many other Curious Particulars referr'd to in the INDEX.

By Mr. JOHN CONSTABLE.

Pars hominum vitiis gaudet conſtanter, & urget
Propoſitum: pars multa notat, modò recta capeſſens,
Interdum pravis obnoxia.

HOR. Sat. L. ii. Sat. 7.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

THE PREFACE

A Long and uniform discourse, with a series of abstract *Rules*, soon tires and fatigues the Reader. Especially if you add the frequent *Definitions*, *Divisions*, and Terms of *Art*, which have naturally place in such a discourse; and above all, the tedious Accuracy of *Analytical* Tables, and the like *Schemes*. A meer distinction of Chapters serves but little in so dry a method of reasoning, and does not sufficiently unbend the application. The Reader is apt to be dissatisfied with hearing

the *Author* talk all alone. Whereas it has been juſtly obſerved by many, that in *Dialogues* he imagines himſelf to ſhare in the converſation. He takes up with one ſide or other, and is glad to meet the anſwers he had already given in his own thoughts, and to find them approv'd by the *Author*: Or where he is in a different opinion from him, he is either willing to be civilly diſabuſed by one who ſeems rather to converſe with him, than to pretend to teach him: Or he is pleaſed to look upon himſelf as judge between two contending parties.

Not only theſe and the like reaſons, but the real occaſion of the following *Reflections*, determined me to write them by way of *Dialogue*. They were really occaſion'd by converſation with one, who ſeemed to me too univerſal an admirer of a book written by an Author whom I

ſhall call by the name of *Callicrates*. I thereupon began to examine ſeveral of his periods, and the nature of his *Style*. Thence I enter'd into farther *Reflections* upon the *Art of Writing*, or *Accuracy of Style*, confirming my opinion with *Inſtances* and *Inſtructions* from ſeveral Authors, and endeavouring to make the matter leſs tedious, by ſeveral little paſſages and applications from *Hiſtory* and *Erudition*.

I Am ſenſible that as it is no ſign of *courage* to be *quarrelſom*, ſo, according to a hint of Mr. *Cowley*[a] it is no ſign of *wit* to be *critical*, in the modern ſenſe of the word. A *Reflection* too of *Rapin*, makes me fear that mine will not be ſo eaſily juſtified in the reſt, as in the method and manner of writing of them. This judicious Author obſerves[b], that

[a] Preface to his Comedy.
[b] *Reſl. Poet.* 28.

Flattery is odious to the Publick by too great a desire of pleasing particulars; and on the contrary, *Satyr* displeases particulars by too great a desire of pleasing the Publick. The same often happens in *Criticisms*. And altho' a *Satyrist* and a *Critick* are very different in their true *Characters*, their *Fate*, as the world goes, is commonly much the same. I must therefore desire the Reader to be so just as to believe me; not Criticism, but meerly my own Improvement, was my design in the following remarks. I writ them only by way of private exercise, that whilst I was employ'd in the study of foreign languages, I might not totally forget my own. And as they were first made without the least offensive design, I desire they may be as unoffensive in their publick appearance.

I WOULD by no means be miſunderſtood by theſe Remarks, to rank *Callicrates* among common Authors. On the contrary, I ſhall always own he is in ſeveral reſpects juſtly to be placed among the beſt. Upon this account I give the Author, whoſe Book was the occaſion of ſeveral of my Remarks, the name of *Callicrates*, which from the *Greek*, and in my opinion of him, will import, that whatever I may diſlike in his Style, I look upon him to write with a great deal both of *Beauty* and *Strength*.

SOME will ſtill know his true name, but many will not. And thoſe who do, will ſee I have taken this expedient out of reſpect to him, and with a tender apprehenſion of being offenſive. Nor do I imagine an Author, who finds one has ſo great a regard for his merit, can

juſtly reſent the finding ſome fault with his Style: Eſpecially ſince it was not choice, but merely accident, that brought it into my Reflections; and wherein I am not conſcious that any leſs civil terms have ſlipt even from my youthful pen. I hope, therefore, to be excuſed, if in this I cannot think him a perfect pattern. As he has ſeveral places almoſt inimitable; ſo ſeveral, I think, ought not to be imitated. And even in thoſe I wou'd apply to him what *Paterculus*[c] ſays of *Cinna*, *auſum eum, quæ nemo auderet bonus; perfeciſſe quæ a nullo niſi fortiſſimo perfici poſſent.* As no perfect Author wou'd give ſome of his bold ſtrokes of the pen, ſo nothing under an eminent wit cou'd perform ſo ſtrongly. Nor does it follow, that I neither ſee nor will own his graces, becauſe I venture to ſay he has failings. *La*

[c] *Lib. 2. aliquantò poſt initium.*

Bruyere

Bruyere[a] ſays, the *Cid* is one of the beſt poems that can be made, and yet that one of the beſt *Criticiſms* that was ever made upon any ſubject, is that upon the *Cid*. Thus a work, tho' highly valuable, may give juſt reaſon of cenſure. And tho' I am very conſcious my Remarks will be far from deſerving the character given to thoſe upon the *Cid*, yet I ſhall not diſallow but *Callicrates*'s book may, in its kind, be as commendable as that famous *Tragedy*.

In writing theſe Papers, I ſoon found the Nature of my Subject ſuggeſted ſeveral Reflections, which ſome Readers wou'd certainly think ſtolen, if I did not own they were borrowed. This was in great part the reaſon of my adding the abſtract of ſeveral places of *Quintilian*, at the end of the Dialogues. I

[a] *Mœurs de ce ſiécle.*

have, upon the ſame account, been exact in other citations: perhaps to a degree of ſcruple. Some Authors multiply them too much, by an affectation of memory and great reading. Others avoid all, that every thing they ſay may ſeem their own. *Epicurus* is ſaid to have writ three hundred books without one citation. And I know ſome who are ſtrangely pleaſed with *Osborn*, where he ſays [e], *Quotations are like ſugar in wine: If the wine is good, its taſte is ſpoiled by the ſugar; if the wine is bad, it ſpoils the ſugar.*

I SHALL not deny but long and frequent citations interrupt too much, and ſo are apt to ſpoil the true taſte of a Style. Yet if commonly ſhort, and properly uſed, I muſt beg leave to diſallow the force of this ſweet compariſon. And I ſuppoſe they

[e] Advice to a Son. *Sect.* 1. §. 14.

will

will grant it does not hold in *Rheniſh* wines. Beſides that in a ſubject of this nature, they are not only excuſable, but in a manner neceſſary, both as to the rules of the beſt maſters of the *Art*, and as to examples of both true and falſe eloquence. Without examples, *abſtract Rules* wou'd ſcarce be perfectly underſtood; and it would be preſumptuous in a private Author, to be giving rules without the ſupport of authority. However, I have caſt moſt of the *Latin Citations* into the margin: Such as remain in the context in that and other languages, need not frighten thoſe who only know *Engliſh*. For they are either literally or equivalently tranſlated in the ſeries of the diſcourſe.

THO' I have had far the greateſt part of theſe papers by me twice the time preſcribed by *Horace*[1], yet I

[1] *Nonumque prematur in annum.* De Arte Poet.

have

have wanted both inclination and leiſure to poliſh them. Otherwiſe, beſides ſeveral corrections, I wou'd willingly have graced them with ſome places of modern writings; for obſerving the graces of the beſt Authors, is the beſt of Criticiſms, and the beſt of Rules. In particular, I would have uſed ſuch as the excellent diſcourſes upon *wit*, and *the pleaſures of imagination*, in the *Spectator*, and Mr. *Pope*'s diſcourſes upon *Homer*, in which his proſe is no leſs admirable and harmonious than his verſe. His *Art of Criticiſm* I was hinder'd from uſing by another reaſon. For ſince to make a leſs tedious variety in explaining quotations from Authors, having occaſionally made uſe of ſome parts of a haſty and youthful tranſlation I made of the two firſt *Canto's* of *Boileau*'s *Art of Poetry*, and of ſome other verſes out of *Latin* and other languages; I eaſily ſaw mine wou'd appear inſupportably

mean

mean in ſo near a view with his; and moreover, I knew not where to fix in particular, in an Author where every thing ſeem'd excellent. Thus was I to omit what I admire beyond expreſſion. I muſt add, I am ſenſible ſeveral of the verſes are ſo looſe and feeble, that nothing can excuſe them, but that I give them not for Poetry, but to explain the quotations from foreign languages.

I HAVE often inſiſted upon the falſe value of the ſhort and ſmart, the gay and *metaphorical* Style, and urged the neceſſity of being exact and *accurate*; and conſequently inculcated the miſtake of thoſe, who under a very ungrounded pretence of writing to the humour of the Age, and of a great and free air in expreſſion and thought, write in a new ſet of words and phraſes, which make it doubtful what language they write in; and for fear of *Pedantry*, neglect

neglect all *Accuracy* and *Rule*. Such vicious methods are so far from being the humour of the age, that there is as good a goût and manner of writing in this age and nation as in any. Nor do I think I am capable, or that there is any need of correcting the general taste of the Age, but of those who would cover their private errors, with a false pretence of publick liking. This, together with the affinity of some rules of *Style* with others, and the natural freedom of *Dialogues*, will excuse, I hope, such places as may seem to be like repetitions of what was said before.

To mention under what disadvantage of youth, place, and other studies, I writ these Reflections at broken intervals; and how I came to publish them now; wou'd, I fear, serve for a very small apology: I shall therefore forbear to trouble

you

you with an excuſe from thoſe and other motives, and leave the whole matter to thoſe Readers, who, like ſociable friendly gueſts, can be contented with a frugal entertainment, without any haughty compariſons of me with themſelves. For thus I explain or apply the words of *Juvenal* [s]:

——————— Superbum
Convivam caveo qui me ſibi comparat, & res
Deſpicit exiguas.

But to conclude this Preface, which is running too great a length, I will only add, that I am very far from imagining I have either fully complied with the precepts, or avoided the faults I have obſerved in others. We often, no leſs in writing than in morals, ſee what ought to

[s] *Sat.* 11. *ver.* 129.

be

be done, while in theſe we will not, and in thoſe we cannot perform it ourſelves. And in fine, I have in this kind what *Cicero* [h] calls ſo unſatiable an ear, that it always deſires, even where it's pleaſed the moſt, ſomething ſtill more perfect.

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[h] *Non aſſequimur, at quid deceat videmus; nec enim nunc de nobis, ſed de re dicimus: In quo tantùm abeſt ut noſtra miremur, ut uſque eò difficiles & morоſi ſimus, ut nobis non ſatisfaciat ipſe* Demoſthenes: *qui quanquam unus eminet inter omnes in omni genere dicendi, non tamen ſemper implet aures meas; ita ſunt avidæ & capaces, & ſemper aliquid immenſum, infinitumque deſiderant.* In Oratore, paulo ante medium.

THE FIRST DIALOGUE, BETWEEN EUDOXUS *and* CLEANDER.

EUDOXUS. WELL, *Cleander*, upon your recommendation I have read over the Book of *Callicrates*.

CLEANDER. Perhaps then we ſhall ſoon have your name in Print, with an attempt at his excellent Style.

EUDOX. Pardon me, Sir. Had I any thoughts of being an Author, I ſhou'd be very far from making him my pattern.

CLEAND. May be you admire him ſo much, that you think him beyond imitation: And that, I aſſure you, is the opinion of moſt who read him.

DIAL. I.

EUDOX. At leaſt I muſt beg leave to declare it is not mine. I will own his Style may be much wonder'd at, but I am not ſo much for admiring it.

CLEAND. Why, what difference do you make here between wondring and admiring?

EUDOX. I am not for diſputing upon words. But, methinks, we wonder at any thing which is ſtrange, tho' we properly only admire what has ſome extraordinary perfection.

CLEAND. I perceive *Callicrates* has had the misfortune to fall into your hands at a bad conjuncture, and to find you in a critical, and, I fear, an exceptious humour.

EUDOX. By no means. I ſhall not queſtion but difference of humour may very much influence the judgment: But, you may believe me, I began to read him with a very favourable prevention. Tho', to be plain, I am never ſo prevail'd upon by the reputation of an Author, as not to retain the liberty of my opinion. As I love to ſee with my own eyes, ſo I am for judging by my own reaſon. And what inclines me to a greater freedom in this point, is, that I ſuppoſe whoever appears in print, to recompenſe

compenſe the pains we take in peruſing his work, will allow us the freedom of our judgment; and putting himſelf into the hands of all, he muſt expect to fall under the cenſure of ſome. DIAL. I.

CLEAND. Are you reſolved then to cenſure *Callicrates*, in ſpite of his numerous admirers?

EUDOX. He may juſtly have many admirers in other reſpects, but I believe his Style is diſliked by great numbers. However, granting what you are pleaſed to believe, yet if I were ſo diſpoſed, I could perhaps give many reaſons to juſtify my reſolution. Tho', I confeſs, it is hard to hold up againſt the common conſent.

CLEAND. Not hard only, but raſh too, and apt to expoſe one to publick laughter. It is never thought any great commendation to diſagree from all the world beſides; and the name of a *Diſſenter* in matters of this nature, lies heavier upon a man's reputation than it does now-a-days among us in point of *Religion*. You remember too what we lately read together in *Pliny's Epiſtles*[a], *In numero ipſo eſt quoddam magnum collatumque conſilium: quibuſque ſingulis judicii parum, omnibus plurimum.* This applied

[a] Lib. 7. Epiſt. 17.

DIAL. I. to our caſe will prove, that where each particular judgment might be ſuſpected, the common judgment of many upon an Author's performance, is almoſt irrefragable.

EUDOX. Some are of opinion that *Pliny* often ſpeaks in ſentences which are rather pretty than true. Whether this is one of thoſe places, let others judge. Nay, were the matter to be decided by his authority, I fancy I could make that very *Epiſtle* ſtand for me.

CLEAND. Thus it is; now-a-days we make Authors ſay what we pleaſe. But what do you anſwer to the argument I pretend to draw from the common approbation?

EUDOX. If that is your only or your beſt argument, *Callicrates* will not be much obliged to you for your defence. For what if I ſhou'd anſwer by applying what *Pliny* ſays of *Orators*[b], *Scito eum peſſimè dicere qui probabitur maximè*; and then back it with an odd ſaying of *Sir Roger L'Eſtrange*[c], that *an univerſal applauſe is at leaſt two thirds of a ſcandal.* Which ſaying, *Callicrates* has borrow'd without telling us ſo: and he adds, *A man may almoſt ſwear he is in the* wrong, *when he is generally cry'd*

[b] Lib. 2. Epiſt. 14. [c] Poſtſcript to *Seneca's* Morals.

up.

up. And more to the ſame purpoſe; and in the ſame tune with him [d] who tells us, *tho' the multitude has ever been allow'd many heads, it was never allow'd any brains.* However, tho' the common conſent is often of great moment, yet never leſs than in the repute of ſome certain *Authors.* Unleſs too that general conſent prove conſtant, it will ſignify but little in whatever matter. Tho' all the world ſhou'd commend a book to-day, if they cry'd it down again to-morrow, I ſuppoſe you wou'd not rely much upon the commendation. Now, without being the ſon of a prophet, I dare ſay the reputation of *Callicrates* will ſoon be conſiderably abated. And then, Sir, I will tell you, Time is a better judge of Authors, than a ſudden repute. DIAL. I.

CLEAND. Time, doubtleſs, is the better judge, becauſe the more mature: But what reaſon have you to think *Callicrates*'s reputation will not be permanent?

EUDOX. My reaſon in part is, that ſeeing the applauſe ſome Authors had formerly, who are now but little eſteem'd, and finding, as I think, ſomewhat of their character in his Style, I may have reaſon to conjecture from them, of him. Now, *Cleander*, that ſome Authors have fallen ſo con-

[d] *Religio Stoici.*

DIAL. I. ſiderably from their firſt vogue, is what you cannot but have obſerved. I could inſtance the matter in ſome of our own nation: But ſince you are a great admirer of *French* Writers, I will do it in ſome of them. Take for example the Gentlemen of *Port-Royal*. Certainly you perceive they are far from having now the mighty vogue, they had ſome years ago. Then all their works were cried up for maſter-pieces. Nothing cou'd be more eloquent and polite. But not long after the world took them in another proſpect, and grew weary of their frequent *Parentheſes*, which clog a diſcourſe and make it languid and unintelligible. Their long *Periods* grew tedious, and were found to be, not ſo much the effects of an abundance of ſenſe, as a want of that exactneſs of thought, that juſt dimenſion and extent of parts, which makes the laſting beauty of Styles; while, as *Ariſtotle* obſerves[e], if they are too long, they tire out the Reader; and if too ſhort, they hurry him along too faſt.

CLEAND. But hold, Sir. Suppoſing thoſe Gentlemen as much fallen as you think, from the common eſteem, yet certainly you cou'd not have pitched upon any writers leſs proper for your purpoſe, or farther from the character of him you cenſure. For my

[e] Rhet. l. 3. cap. 9.

part,

part, I find his Style convenient for ſhort Lungs; and methinks, of all things, you cannot complain his Periods put you out of breath. DIAL. I.

EUDOX. They ſeem indeed to be generally made in favour of Readers that are troubled with an *Aſthma*; and I fear, his are as much too ſhort, as thoſe others are too long. And yet the perfection of a *Style*, as of all other things, conſiſts in a *Medium*. As for the likeneſs I pretend is in both, it conſiſts in the novelty of their Styles, and the laſtingneſs of their Vogue. Their way of writing was as new once, as his now; and perhaps an appearance of novelty will be found the great, but weak ſupport of both.

CLEAND. Why indeed there is nothing ſo old, but it once was new. So that, methinks, you will have nothing eſteem'd, becauſe its credit muſt have a beginning. Which is an injuſtice, you know, made *Horace* loſe his temper, and wou'd vex many a leſs cholerick man[f].

EUDOX. All I pretend, is, that a man's riſing credit, to be truly valuable, muſt have

[f] *Indignor quidquam reprehendi non quia craſsè compoſitum, illepidéve putetur, ſed quia nuper.* Lib. 2. Epiſt. 2.

DIAL. I. some other support besides the novelty of his performance.

CLEAND. Now then *Callicrates*'s way of writing, is not only new and peculiar to himself, but there is an admirable strength in his expressions. His thoughts seem to be properly his own, and to flow from an extraordinary elevation of wit. Every sentence seems to be full of sense, and the second still more surprizing than the first.

EUDOX. Just as I thought. His flashing expressions have surprized you too much to give you the leisure of an examination of them. Those concise Sentences, those short Cuts, those continual Metaphors, and that which I call the *Tic-Tac*, of an *Antithesis*, strikes indeed at first, but will seldom bear the test of a reflection. Oftentimes you find those turns of expression and thought, as *Quintilian*[g] observes, are ridiculous when examin'd, tho' at first they pleased extremely, and seem'd wondrous witty. I cannot but think a second reading will much abate your opinion in this matter, and that a third will bring you over to mine.

CLEAND. Here you are at Prophecies again.

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[g] *Excussa risum habent; inventa, facie ingenii blandiuntur.* l. 8. cap. 5.

EUDOX.

DIAL. I.

EUDOX. All this propheſying conſiſts only in drawing a natural inference from paſt experience. You know how much you admired at firſt *Lipſius*'s hopping ſtyle: yet, as I told you then, you ſoon changed your opinion, and with a great deal of reaſon. For tho' I always admired *Lipſius* upon many accounts, yet never, I can aſſure you, for his Style. Now, methinks, the *Engliſh* of *Callicrates* is ſomething like *Lipſius*'s *Latin*.

CLEAND. I muſt confeſs the very compariſon ſtaggers me a little. But ſomething, Sir, muſt be allowed to the particular genius of every language; and a way of writing that will not agree ſo well with the *Latin* tongue, may yet run prettily in *Engliſh*. For *Latin* being more regular and majeſtick, ſeems to require a graver pace, and cannot be allowed that freedom which the very irregularity of our language ſeems to give us.

EUDOX. A great deal muſt certainly be granted to the Genius of a Language, which is as different in every nation as their way of government. But as common ſenſe is every where the ſame, and what is reaſon in *Engliſh*, will be reaſon in *Latin* too; ſo in the very way of writing, there is ſomething both pleaſing and neceſſary in every language; there is ſomething common,

DIAL. I. mon, which runs through all and every one, not excluded by any particularity of Genius, but univerſally requiſite. And this I take to be that equality of Style, that exactneſs which muſt be obſerved, as well in propriety of expreſſion, as in the proportion of the thoughts. For my part, I could never admire thoſe writings where every other ſentence ſeems to be a different piece: [h] where the expreſſion is perpetually forc'd from a metaphor; where every now and then one meets with thoſe ſentences and thoughts, which, as [i] *Quintilian* ſays, wou'd not look ſo great, but that every thing round 'em is mean. And indeed they look ſtaringly on it, as if they wonder'd to find themſelves out of their place, and in the midſt of others of a lower ſize.

CLEAND. Wou'd you then have an Author always creep for fear of ſoaring too high? If a man were not allowed ſometimes to raiſe both his thoughts and expreſſions, we ſhou'd take but little ſatisfaction in reading. I love to meet in an Author a certain noble air, that cannot endure a ſervile ſubjection to ſuch rules and precepts, as make the work rather mean than exact. *Cicero*, I ſuppoſe, is a good

[h] *Sit quidvis ſimplex duntaxat & unum.* Hor. Art. Poet.

[i] *Sententiæ ipſæ, quas ſolas petunt, magis eminent quum omnia circa illas ſordida & abjecta ſunt.* Lib. 2. Cap. 12.

judge in the matter. And I remember he says, a well-underſtood negligence is better than an affected accuracy [k]. I will even venture to ſay, that nothing is leſs exact, than what is always ſo. None are leſs pleaſing than your artificial Authors. Much after the ſame manner, in one ſenſe, (if you will give me leave to make ſo odd a compariſon) as *Martial* ſays, no one ſmells worſe than he that is always perfumed [l]. Is it not better too, to venture now and then at ſome noble ſally of wit, than always to creep ſneakingly along for fear of out-walking your rules? or, as *Quintilian* has it [m], to lie always flat, for fear of a fall. In a word, I had rather be witty with hazard, than inſipid by art. DIAL. I.

EUDOX. So I perceive you are as fond of freedom in your thoughts, as *Libertines* are in their manners. However, Sir, (to uſe *Callicrates*'s phraſe) *not to cramp your fancy and cut the ſinews of your eloquence*, take if you pleaſe a liberty, but let it be reaſonable [n]. A free eaſy air and carriage is extremely taking; but it degenerates into ridiculouſneſs, when it is foppiſh and

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[k] *Quadam etiam negligentia eſt diligens.* De Orat. l. 3. poſt medium.

[l] Poſthume *non benè olet, qui benè ſemper olet.*

[m] *Dum timent ne aliquando cadant, ſemper jacent.* Lib. 8. cap. 5.

[n] *Dabiturque licentia ſumpta pudenter.* Hor. Art. Poët.

flaunting.

DIAL. I. flaunting. The like happens in Styles; and moreover, thoſe noble authors, as you call them, often give their notions ſo rambling a liberty, that it leads to extravagance. But remember, that when I ſpeak in terms of this harſh nature, I wou'd by no means have you think I make the application to *Callicrates*. Such general reflections as I have, or may hereafter make, upon falſe eloquence, though occaſion'd by what I may ſay of him, are not my ſentiment of his writing, any farther than I ſhall expreſſly make the application. And ſince you will have my opinion upon the *Art of Writing*, I ſhall be forced to take a much larger compaſs than merely what I think may be faulty in him. Let me add then, that *Libertine* and *Rule-Hating Authors* are apt to fall ſhort of common ſenſe, for fear of being reaſonable by conſtraint. Rather than be confined to precepts of art, they follow every riſing fancy, and rather chuſe to talk non-ſenſe freely, than reaſon by rule. They run on without order, for fear of ſeeming ſlaves to method. They think nothing is great, but what is unconfin'd; nothing eaſy, but what is looſe *. Upon a notion of diſengaged thoughts, they rove in a maze of unconnected ideas; and in the wandring fit, loſe themſelves

* *Rudia politis majora, & ſparſa compoſitis numeroſiora creduntur.* Quint. l. 2. cap. 12.

and

and their reader. For my part, I cannot imagine, why thoſe ſhould be moſt admir'd who are moſt irregular. It is, as *Quintilian* hints, juſt as if it was more commendable to break a door with violence, than to open it, or to drag rather than lead you [p]. In a word, Libertiniſm is methinks vicious in Writings as in Morals. DIAL. I.

CLEAND. Severity too is no leſs to be avoided in both. And as in Morals a *Divine* ſhou'd neither be lax nor rigid, ſo in Writings one ſhou'd neither be ſcrupulouſly nice, nor immoderately free. Now I do not think it at all immoderate, to venture upon occaſions at a noble flight, to raiſe a thought above the common pitch, to hazard a new word or expreſſion. *Horace* has pronounced it, that this always was, and ever will be lawful [q]. The ſame liberty extends to the uſe of ſhort metaphors, which are as pleaſing as they are unexpected; and to that cloſeneſs of ſentences, that ſmart conciſeneſs of *Style*, which ſeems to cut to the quick, and to mean more than is expreſſed; and, in fine, to that vehemence of *Style* which is the effect of a lively fire and ſtrength of thought.

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[p] *Majorem habere vim credunt ea quæ non habent artem; ut effringere quàm aperire, rumpere quàm ſolvere, trahere quàm ducere, putant robuſtius.* Quint. l. 2. cap. 12.

[q] *Licuit ſemperque licebit, ſignatum preſente notâ producere nomen* Art. Poët.

DIAL. I.

EUDOX. But then let not fury and rage paſs for vehemence and ſtrength. Some of thoſe pretended ſtrong authors, by the confuſion, tumult, and fury of their expreſſions, can ſcarce be deſcribed in milder terms than theſe verſes of *Milton:*

Others with vaſt Typhœan *rage more fell,*
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air
In whirlwind. Hell ſcarce holds the wild uproar[r].

At other times, notwithſtanding all their ſeeming flaſhes and fire of imagination, methinks they are more cold than ſnow and ice. If I may add an application of what *Milton* ſays a little after, I will tell you, that near thoſe burning lines,

[s] *A frozen continent*
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual ſtorms
Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land
Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin ſeems
Of ancient pile; all elſe deep ſnow and ice,
A gulf profound.

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[r] Paradiſe Loſt. *Lib.* 2. *v.* 539. [s] Ibid. *v.* 587.

And

And now my hand is in, (tho' I ſee theſe applications are overſtretch'd and *hyperbolical*, yet becauſe proper to make the matter ſenſible by exaggerating) I will read you another place which I apply to theſe Authors. For when in their really cold, but ſeemingly fiery expreſſions, I meet their particular rage of *Antitheſes*, I cannot but think of theſe lines in the ſame book: DIAL. I.

[t] *Each at the head*
Level'd his deadly aim; their fatal hands
No ſecond ſtroke intend; and ſuch a frown
Each caſt at th' other, as when two black clouds
With heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on
Over the Caſpian, *then ſtand front to front*
Hovering a ſpace, till winds the ſignal blow
To join their dark encounter in mid air.

CLEAND. Well: never cou'd I imagine thoſe places which are ſo noble in *Milton*, cou'd be brought to a ſubject of this nature, and for a deſcription of a fiery *Antithetical* Style. Yet I own the method is amuſing, and I wou'd willingly ſee if you have ſtill any more applications of that kind, which may clear your idea of ſuch expreſſions as ſeem at firſt ſo full of a noble fire.

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[t] Ibid. *v.* 711.

EUDOX.

DIAL. I.

EUDOX. I will give you only one more. For to multiply them too much, wou'd ſoon make them tedious. Thoſe expreſſions, notwithſtanding all the ſeeming luſtre, and all the other deceitful appearances they bear at a diſtance, or ſudden view, are of a very different aſpect when you draw near. You then find 'em dark, obſcure, wild in the boundleſs extent of their notions. Tho' here and there ſome glimmerings of light give a pleaſing kind of reflection, the body of thoſe *Styles* ſeems expreſs'd in what *Milton* ſays of that part of the globe terreſtrial, upon which *Satan* deſcends in the third Book. Here is the place [u].

A globe far off
It ſeem'd; now ſeems a boundleſs continent,
Dark, waſte, and wild, under the frown of night
Starleſs expos'd, and ever threatning ſtorms
Of Chaos *bluſtering round, inclement sky;*
Save on that ſide which from the wall of heaven
Tho' diſtant far, ſome ſmall reflection gains
Of glimmering air, leſs vex'd with tempeſt loud.

CLEAND. Unleſs you had taught me to admire *Milton*, I ſhou'd begin to ſuſpect

[u] Lib. 3. v. 423.

you

you deſign'd a by-fling at him too, while you ſeem to aim only at others. DIAL. I.

EUDOX. By no means. I am ſtill the ſame admirer of that Poem, in which his uncommon genius cou'd every where ſupport its grandeur; and have only read you thoſe places to enliven our diſcourſe, by deſcriptions of very different objects tranſfer'd to the matter we are upon. Wherein to proceed; I own I hate to read one that affects, eſpecially in proſe, a grandeur beyond his ſtrength, and ſubject; and will be firy beyond reaſon. Even thoſe who have a more than ordinary elevation of wit, ſhou'd be very cautious how far they indulge it, leſt it ſhould raiſe them to a greater fall, as it commonly happens in high and ſudden flights. Let 'em turn to themſelves thoſe verſes of *Taſſo:*

A i voli troppo alti & repentini
Sogliono i precipitii eſſer vicini[a].

Near flights that are too ſudden and too high,
The greateſt falls and precipices lie.

CLEAND. Give me leave to tell you, that I fear this caution will, as I told you before, make them always creep for fear of a fall. Too great a fear of falſe eloquence

[a] *Canto* 2. *Stan.* 7.

DIAL. I. will be apt to leave us no eloquence at all. I muſt further beg leave to tell you, that the averſion you expreſs from thoſe who ſeek elevation of thought, without an anxious regard to rules, puts me in mind of *Marcus Aurelius-Severus*. He was ſo rigorous a lover of juſtice, that his blood flush'd in his face, and his choler was ſtirr'd even to vomiting, at the very ſight of a corrupt judge. Methinks you are almoſt as ſqueamiſh at the ſight of a corrupt ſtyle.

EUDOX. That Emperor, Sir, you know was however not cruel, nor ever put any one to death who was not condemn'd by the ſenate. Thus whatever averſion I may have from corrupt authors, I wou'd not have any of their periods condemn'd, but by the ſentence of thoſe judges who make the ſenate of eloquence; ſuch as *Ariſtotle*, *Cicero* and *Quintilian*. They, I am ſure, will agree, that it is not in vaſt terms, and rattling words, nor in ſwelling epithets and bold metaphors, nor in haughty expreſſions and ſtrutting periods, that true nobleneſs of *Style* conſiſts: But in a modeſt grandeur, in a ſmooth riſing of the pen, till it reaches, not till it exceeds the greatneſs of the thought and ſubject.

CLEAND. Yet as *Alexander* has gain'd the name of *Great*, though not all his actions can be excuſed from raſhneſs, and ſome

we

we muſt own were mean; ſo a greatneſs of *Style* may be the proper character of ſome writers, tho' ſome of their expreſſions may fly too high, and others fall too low. DIAL. I.

EUDOX. And therefore it is not one or two faults which ſhould degrade an author. But when his ambition and paſſion generally lead him beyond bounds, when a common violence, and, as it were, tumultuouſneſs of *Style*, makes him infringe eſtabliſh'd principles of writing, when by a frequent abuſe or miſtake of wit, or under a popular pretence of writing to the humour of the age, he affects a domineering kind of tyranny in the republic of learning, by open neglect of fundamental laws, he puts me in mind of the *Gracchi*, who, according to the ſaying of *Velleius Paterculus*[v], if they wou'd have contented themſelves with an honourable ſhare of civil government, might have quietly received from the common-wealth, all they cou'd hope by thoſe tumultuous meaſures which brought 'em to an end equally miſerable and unpitied, notwithſtanding their ſeveral good qualities.

CLEAND. But ſtill, why ſhou'd it not be here as in many other things, where we are moſt pleaſed by the boldeſt adventures?

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[v] Gracchi *optimis ingeniis malè uſi— ſi civilem dignitatis concupiſſent modum, quidquid tumultuando adipiſci geſtierunt, quietis obtuliſſet Reſpublica.* Lib. 2. ſub Initium.

DIAL. I.

EUDOX. Why, *Cleander*, wou'd you have the pleaſure of reading, like that of ſeeing rope-dancers, where people take a pleaſure in ſeeing men in danger of their lives? And indeed the boldeſt in both thoſe kinds do generally break their necks at laſt. I have another odd compariſon in my head, that thoſe writers are like bold ſwimmers. To be able to ſwim may ſometimes ſave a man in a ſudden occaſion of danger: But when practiſed too much, it proves the ruin of many, by encreaſing their confidence, and leading them too far out of their depth. Thus the methods I ſpeak of, are ſometimes uſeful, but in the like manner dangerous. Thoſe ventureſome gentlemen advance ſo far, that either the ſtream grows too ſtrong for 'em, and they are hurried into a gulph, or ſeized by a cramp, and ſink of a ſudden.

CLEAND. There is however a ſtrong and elevated way of writing, which expoſes not to thoſe fatal dangers. Happy thoſe Authors who can hit it right. They are ſure to pleaſe by their agreeable unexpected turns.

EUDOX. I fear they are not ſure to pleaſe beyond the firſt reading. Thoſe airy turns, which I perceive you admire, may amuſe at firſt, and may paſs in a work that is to be laid aſide after the firſt peruſal. For as

as *Callicrates* obſerves, *if the Sun were not to riſe again, it would look bigger for him to tumble from the ſky at noon with all his light and heat about him*, than to walk equally and ſmoothly down below the *Horizon*. So one who does not deſign his works for a ſecond reading, may be flaſhy, and full of your ſurprizes. But if he would be often peruſed, a different method wou'd be more ſure of ſucceſs. Falſe gems ſhine bright at firſt, but a little uſe decays their luſtre, and ſhews what they are. The ſame happens in your unnatural, ſurprizing Styles. Thus a perpetual *Laconiſm* ſtrikes at firſt, but upon reflection you will find it extremely weak. The imagination cannot always keep up to that conſtraint. 'Tis above the capacity of man to be always extraordinarily witty, and whoever aims at it in every ſentence, muſt of neceſſity fall into affectation, falſe conceits, flat and impertinent ideas[w]. Then, being ever in ſearch of what *Horace* calls *ambitioſa ornamenta*, he will often run to thoſe expreſſions where the words are too large for the ſenſe; and by ſwelling his phraſes with bluſtering words, will make noiſe paſs for wit; and upon a cloſer examination, you will be ſo far from true wit, that it will be hard to find the ſenſe.

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[w] *Inde minuti corruptique ſenſiculi & extra rem petiti. Hoc quoque accidit quod ſolas captanti ſententias, multas neceſſe eſt dicere leves, frigidas, ineptas. Neque enim aliter poteſt eſſe ubi de numero laboratur.* Quint. l. 8. cap. 5.

DIAL. I. I ſhou'd be very ſorry to lay this with any general charge to *Callicrates*'s account; But when he ſays that *deſpair caſts a gloominеſs upon the ſoul, and lays her in a dungeon beyond the notion of pre-exiſtence*, it ſounds, no doubt, extremely high; yet I fancy you wou'd be puzzled to give a clear and diſtinct perception of the meaning. If I might expreſs myſelf in the way of ſome writers, I wou'd ſay, *it is all meer gloom and dungeon.*

CLEAND. Tho' now and then you meet with an expreſſion that is too far ſtretch'd, yet if it is but ſeldom, the other beauties of the work ſhou'd attone for a few miſtakes. Unleſs you will be more ſevere than *Horace* [x].

EUDOX. They may attone for them in part, But ſtill thoſe ſort of expreſſions are ſo incident to authors who will be ever aiming at your ſurprizing Style, that this very thing ſhou'd make that way of writing be leſs admired, and followed; and when under high words there comes a mixture of mean thoughts, it gives this kind of Style ſuch an air, as makes it ſtill more inſupportable. *Callicrates* is a man of ſo much ſenſe, that nothing but the misfortune of his way of writing cou'd lead him into ſomething of

[x] *Ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis offendar maculis.* Art. Poët.

this

this kind. Thus when he ſays, *'tis better to clap the extinguiſher of honour upon our vital flame, rather than to let it burn blue, and lie agonizing in the ſocket till it goes out in no perfume*; the greatneſs of the words, with the meanneſs of the *Image*, makes it doubly abſurd. And here I cannot but take notice, that a miſtaken greatneſs and ſingularity of Style is apt to give their diſcourſes a ridiculous turn, and expoſe ſuch authors to be ridiculed in the graveſt ſubjects. DIAL. I.

CLEAND. There is nothing ſo ſerious but a drolling humour may ridicule: And I ſuppoſe you will not condemn *Virgil* becauſe he has been traveſtied.

EUDOX. Tho' any thing may be ſo repreſented as to make a ridiculous figure, yet ſome things there are, which of themſelves leave an odd *Idea* in the mind, and need not the help of a Droll, to be ſmiled at: which *Ariſtotle*[y] obſerves to be a great fault, and that it happens when the words are much too mean, or too big for the notion, and ſubject in hand. Now whoever pretends to be particular in every ſentence, and continually runs into unuſual compariſons and metaphors, will ſcarce be able to manage, with all the moderation requiſite to maintain the dignity of a ſober diſcourſe.

[y] Rhet. *l.* 3. *c.* 7.

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CLEAND. As hard as you think it in thoſe methods of writing, not to ſlip into ſome expreſſions which may make one ſmile in a ſerious matter, yet what *Callicrates* has of that nature, rather ſerves to enliven his diſcourſe, than to impair its vigour. Methinks one muſt be ſtrangely miſliking, not to admire the convincingneſs of his way of writing, where every word has a particular force, and the following is ſtill a ſtronger argument than the former. Every thing ſeems to carry with it a new conviction, and will make you aſſent to his opinion, though you ſmile at the expreſſion.

EUDOX. Perhaps you do not ſufficiently diſtinguiſh between the ſurprize and the conviction of his arguments. Upon reflection you will often find the ſingularity of the turn is what you took for the ſolidity of a proof. He ſays, *he finds the ſatisfaction of a Proſpect, Muſick or Perfume is not thinner for being beaten.* Though I never tried the experiment in a mortar, nor put 'em to the proof of a peſtle, I wou'd not ſwear the ſame of his reaſons. As when he tells us, *if we wou'd only conquer our imagination, we might die eaſier of a faggot than of a fever*; and then proves it, *becauſe 'tis better to have a fire kindled without than within us.* I fear there is no need of putting ſuch arguments to a beating,

beating, to make 'em thinner. However, tho' this convinces me not, yet I am altogether of his opinion when he gravely affirms, that *by running in the dark a man may happen to juſtle a poſt.* I agree with him too, *'tis more probable a man may bring all his limbs from his bed, than from a town-wall at a brisk attack.* *Philautus* was certainly of this opinion, when he fear'd *Tim*, if he walk'd behind him, might take a bite at his legs; whereas having but one body, he deſired to carry it all home, and to continue the experiment of how long a carcaſs, well look'd to, might laſt. But then again, this very thing makes me not wonder quite ſo much as I ſee *Callicrates* does, *why men don't dance upon the battlements of houſes, vault down the monument, and jump into a furnace for diverſion?* Moreover he tells us, when diſcourſing upon the value of life, that *people are not ſo apt to be too big to live, as too little to die*; which tho' I ſcarce can ſay I clearly underſtand, yet I ſuppoſe, to uſe his terms, *it is good husbandry to nurſe up the vital flame as long as the matter will laſt.* He may declare again if he pleaſes, that *people are impoſed upon by words and things ill join'd together*; they will never believe his paradox, that *a natural death is the moſt violent*; nor will he perſuade 'em eaſily *to diſcharge the laſt pulſe in the face of death to maintain the honour of our ſpecies,* be-

DIAL. I.

DIAL. I. *becauſe a death-bed figure is an humbling ſight, and a terrible rebuke to the dignity of humane nature.*

CLEAND. Under favour, Sir, I doubt this method of culling out here and there a ſentence, and then joining 'em into an odd ſenſe, is not very fair dealing. Any diſcourſe will ſeem abſurd if you take it to pieces and leave the connection behind. For, as your above-mention'd *Tim* quotes out of *Leviathan*, the general uſe of ſpeech is *to transfer our mental diſcourſe into verbal, or the train of thoughts into a train of words.* So that to interrupt the train of an author's words, is to falſify his ſenſe: And at that rate you may make the cloſeſt reaſoning ſeem very incoherent ſtuff.

EUDOX. I confeſs, *Cleander*, if you will give me leave to uſe your author's terms, the method has ſometimes *no creditable complexion:* Yet in ſome occaſions there is no great reaſon to hope any better. When a Style ſeems to carry with it a perpetual air of aſſurance, and runs in as high a tone as if we were to be commanded, rather than perſuaded into an aſſent; when the terms look like *Apothegms*, and are meer *Sophiſms*; when the preface threatens to handle important points of morality with all the zeal and force the matter requires; if ſtill there is every now and then, ſome

odd compariſon or metaphor, ſome remarkable impropriety of expreſſion and thought, the *Author*, not the Reader, muſt anſwer for the *Burleſque*. Your *Author*, Sir, obſerves, that *in violent wiſhes, the hurry of the purſuit makes but a ſhuffling pace, and ſpoils the gracefulneſs of the motion.* There is an impetuoſity and hurry of Style which has much of the like effect. And when he obſerved that *ſometimes a man cracks his conſcience, as a horſe does his wind by ſtraining up hill*, he might as well have reflected, that ſometimes ſolidity of reaſon is loſt by forcing it too high. DIAL. I.

CLEAND. Let me beg of you, Sir, not quite ſo faſt. You begin to declaim ſomewhat tragically upon the matter. You run on as if you had been prepared for a diſpute: I fancy you have been reading ſome modern criticks, who have put you into this ſeverity of humour.

EUDOX. No, Sir. What I have ſaid, is no more than what the matter itſelf ſuggeſts, and might naturally occur to any one, without the leaſt deſign of criticiſm, or ill humour. However, that you may not think I am grown too exceptious; without arguing the caſe any farther, I will ſtand to this propoſal: If you will take the pains to read over this book a ſecond time, and then tell me, if you do not like it worſe;

DIAL. I. I will be bound to read it again my ſelf, and ſee if I can like it better.

CLEAND. Agreed. And ſo for the preſent I will take my leave: But aſſure your ſelf I will return again to the charge within ſome few days.

THE

THE

SECOND DIALOGUE,

BETWEEN

CLEANDER, EUDOXUS, *and* CRITOMACHUS,

CLEAND. YOU ſee, Sir, I am as good as my word in returning ſoon again to the charge.

EUDOX. But, Sir, you never ſaid you wou'd bring a ſecond with you; and yet by yours and *Critomachus*'s ſmiles, I ſuſpect that is partly the reaſon of his coming. However, his company is always acceptable; and I had rather forego the equality of the engagement, than want the pleaſure of his converſation.

CRITOM. Your compliment is obliging, tho' almoſt too ceremonious for friends ſo perfectly acquainted. At leaſt, Sir, to uſe no ceremonies with you, I own you have gueſſed

DIAL. II. guessed exactly right. Yesterday morning I found *Cleander* reading *Callicrates* with great attention. He presently told me the occasion of it; and finding your late conversation had work'd upon him, I profer'd to undertake the cause.

EUDOX. It seems then, *Cleander*, the second lecture has had the effect I foretold.

CLEAND. I never thought it a point of honour to maintain a mistake, and be stiff in error. I own therefore, I begin to be of a different opinion in the matter.

CRITOM. Certainly, *Eudoxus*, you must have argued very closely with him to make so sudden a change.

EUDOX. The only, in a manner, or at least the chief argument I used, was giving a few hints at some of the chief faults, occasioned by affectation of Style, and a presumption, that a second reading, after those hints, wou'd much alter his opinion; and you see I was not much mistaken.

CLEAND. You will give me leave, *Eudoxus*, to tell you, the other reasons you gave, made little impression upon me, till at the second reading I began to observe a certain unnaturalness of Style, which working more upon the imagination than reason,

reaſon, muſt conſequently be leſs admired the more it is examin'd. DIAL. II.

CRITOM. For my part, often reading ſuch Books has had a very differeht effect upon me: It has rather increaſed than diminiſhed my eſteem. I ſtill found ſome new beauty which at firſt I had overlook'd, and ſeem'd ſtill to perceive a greater abundance of ſenſe than cou'd be carried away at ſeveral readings; which is certainly one of the greateſt talents of a writer.

EUDOX. But what if in ſome writers this vaſt abundance of ſenſe ſhou'd at the bottom be only an abundance of new words or phraſes, which ſeem to have a particular meaning, becauſe they are of an extraordinary hue, or combined in a ſingular way?

CRITOM. No, no, Sir, I do not meaſure ſenſe by the bigneſs of words. What I admire is, that vaſt fund of wit, which is requiſite to ſupply ſo great a variety of thoughts, as is neceſſary to carry on that kind of Style. Nor do I mean this of *Callicrates* only, but of others who write in that turn of expreſſion.

EUDOX. And by your leave, Sir, it is juſt thoſe others, who are in that turn of it, that I chiefly preſume to diſapprove. For

DIAL. II. I muſt declare to you, as I have done to *Cleander*, that I have much too great a value for *Callicrates*, to charge him with what I ſay in general of thoſe ſort of writers, whoſe copiouſneſs is often nothing but a repeating of the ſame thing, in words which differ much more in the ſound than in the meaning. 'Tis only multiplying words to the ſame ſenſe. What was ſufficiently expreſſed in the firſt period, is varied into ſeveral others, 'till at length the thought is ſo toſſed and turned, that it comes to nothing, being ſmother'd by I know not how many inſignificant variations. This *Quintilian* has long ſince remark'd in that kind of Style [a].

CRITOM. Why then, *Eudoxus*, do you think thoſe Authors have bewitched us, or ſo prepoſſeſſed us in their favour, that we cannot judge of them with indifference, and ſee their defects. Having no manner of intereſt in their reputation, I cannot imagine, what ſhou'd byaſs me ſo far as to forego my reaſon in their favour and defence.

EUDOX. To be byaſſed in favour of an Author, it is not at all neceſſary to be join'd in one common intereſt. The very novelty

[a] *Nam & quod rectè dici poteſt, circumimus amore verborum; & quod ſatis dictum eſt repetimus, & quod uno verbo patet, pluribus oneramus: & pleraque ſignificare melius putamus quam dicere.* Lib. 8. Proëm.

of

of his Style (for novelty has a ſtrange attractive) does often pleaſe ſo at the very beginning, that one is apt, upon the prevalence of the firſt ſurprize, to take ſuch a liking as makes one think there is ſomething excellent in every extraordinary turn. When once we are thus prejudiced in favour of a book, we read on with a deſign to admire, rather than examine. The reaſon is very natural; for when once we are prepoſſeſs'd on the favourable ſide, we think it a reflection upon our wit, not to perceive a great deal, where perhaps the author meant but little. It is what you *Carteſians* object to *Peripateticks*, that doating upon *Ariſtotle*, they find more in him than ever he thought of: And here by the help of ſome of thoſe authors you admire [b], I could read you a long lecture againſt *Prejudice*, a *Topic* continually handled by ſome writers, and indeed by moſt *Innovators*, whether in Philoſophy or Religion. DIAL. II.

CRITOM. As great an admirer of thoſe writers as you are pleas'd to make me, I ſtill think arguments drawn from prejudice, prove equally on both ſides. I am ſure at leaſt, they are equally advanced on both, and make little to the purpoſe on either.

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[b] *Art de Penſer, Recherche de la Verité, &c.*

DIAL. II.

CLEAND. There, *Critomachus*, you will give me leave to interpoſe my own experience. For though one may be prejudiced as much againſt, as in favour of an Author, yet, methinks, it is far more natural, to be prevented in favour of one who has the commendation of a ſurprizing novelty.

CRITOM. I do not love to argue againſt experience, otherwiſe I wou'd make bold to tell you, I am of the contrary opinion. I fear we are more apt to cenſure than to approve other men's undertakings. Thoſe who pretend to have ſtudied the nature of man, tell us, the reaſon is, that a certain inborn principle of ſelf-eſteem, makes us unwilling to acknowledge the perfections of others; imagining our merit diminiſhes by the increaſe of theirs.

CLEAND. There may be ſomething of that in people of the ſame profeſſion, where emuloſity inclines 'em to undervalue thoſe who may ſtand in their light, tho' they will, as *Horace* obſerves [c], admire 'em when they are removed out of the way. But where there is no concurrence in the deſign, there can ſcarce be any *emuloſity*.

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[c] *Urit enim fulgore ſuo, nam & pragravat artes infra ſe poſitas. Extinctus amabitur Idem.* Lib. 2. Epiſt. 1.

And

And therefore ſince, as I ſuppoſe, neither you nor I have any deſign to appear in print, I do not ſee what can thus influence our judgment of Authors. DIAL. II.

CRITOM. Alas, Sir, there are few but pretend to be witty, and therefore when they find a contemporary Author begins to have a topping credit, 'tis very natural to be drawing him to a common level. This is certainly the reaſon we are more inclin'd to criticize modern than antient Authors. Nay, very often we praiſe the Antients only to ſpite the Moderns, if you believe *Horace* again[d]. We look upon thoſe as too far off to enter into our concern of reputation: and therefore eaſily let 'em paſs without any envious ſeverity; whilſt looking upon theſe with a nearer eye, we think the diſtance not ſo great; but by a little criticiſm we may make way for a compariſon between them and our ſelves.

EUDOX. Prethee, *Critomachus*, don't make ſuch envious creatures of us. As if we could not ſuffer an Author to riſe in the common eſteem, without bearing him a grudge! I cannot endure to think man is of ſo envious an humour. I declare, for my part, I look upon *Callicrates* and *Mon-*

[d] *Ingeniis non ille favet, plauditque ſepultis, noſtra ſed impugnat, nos noſtraque lividus odit.* Lib. 2. Epiſt. 2.

DIAL. II. *taigne* with equal indifference, tho' one is an extern, and farther off than the other. Nor do I perceive my ſelf the leaſt more jealous of the name one has now, and the other had a hundred years ago. Why then may I not give my opinion equally of both?

CLEAND. 'Tis certainly a little hard to think a man envious becauſe he does not like every Author that lives at the ſame time. And I ſuppoſe, *Critomachus*, you will not have every Author claim a right to our eſteem, and conſtrain our judgment, meerly becauſe he appears in publick while we are alive.

CRITOM. By no means. Only I wou'd not have us ſo free in our cenſures. We ſhou'd encourage witty undertakings, and countenance thoſe writers who might otherwiſe be a credit to our age, if they were not deterred by the tyranny of criticks.

CLEAND. As for that, Sir, I think few Authors are ſo daſtardly as to be hinder'd by any ſuch apprehenſion. The humour of printing has now gone ſo far, that criticizing ſeems only, by ſcratching, to make it itch the more. I wiſh a more efficacious remedy cou'd be found to the diſeaſe. But I fear the Republick of Learning may ſay of Scriblers, what *Tacitus* does of *Aſtrologers*, that

that they are a ſort of men who will be al- DIAL. ways prohibited, but always continued [e]. II.

CRITOM. I muſt needs grant our age is too licentious in printing. But, I hope, *Cleander*, you are not ſo ſuddenly, and ſo fully changed to a contrary extreme, as to count *Callicrates* among the ſcriblers.

CLEAND. So far from it, that altho' I do not admire his way of writing ſo much as I did at firſt, yet I ſtill place him above vulgar writers; and I dare ſay, *Eudoxus* will not deny him the merit of an ingenious Author.

EUDOX. I ſhou'd be very unjuſt to refuſe him that character; yet if his wit was in a different turn of expreſſion, I ſhou'd like it better. The particular jog of his periods, the continual metaphors, and the whole air of his Style, has more of a forced than native luſtre. It looks too like painting, which can never equal the charms of a natural beauty. [f] *Quintilian* ſays, that an effeminate ſtudy of beauty is only taking pains to be ugly. Which puts me in mind of what your Author ſays, that *Authors*,

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[e] *Genus hominum potentibus infidum, ſperantibus fallax; quod in civitate noſtrâ & vetabitur ſemper, & retinebitur.* Hiſt. Lib. 1.

[f] *Fucata muliebriter, fœdiſſima ſunt ipſo formæ labore.* Lib. 8. Proœm.

DIAL. II. *like women, dreſs when they make a viſit.* Now if the dreſs is too gaudy and whimſical, it will rather expoſe, than adorn the Lady; and thus, if a Style has too much of the flaſhy and ſingular, it will deſerve no better ſucceſs: Eſpecially if the dreſs and garb is poetical; wherein I cannot ſay *Callierates* is faulty. But ſome there are who fall into it in ſo putid an exceſs, as to take a greater licence in multiplied *Epithets*, wild *Hyperboles*, and *Metaphors* as wild, than the maddeſt inhabitant of *Parnaſſus*. I wonder the muſes do not ſet ſome ſnarling ſatyriſt at their heels, and bark them out of their *verdant meadows all enamel'd with the flow'ry ſpring*.

CRITOM. However averſe I am from too much criticiſm, I do not deſign to defend all ſorts of writers: and leaſt of all, thoſe poets in proſe. You have there, I ſee, the author of *Human Prudence*. There I lately met with a place of that nature which cannot be excuſed. Here it is, in the deſcription of *the Grotto*, or a retired life. § " Here " I obſerve, ſays this Author, the Lady *Flora*, " to cloath our grandam Earth with a new " livery, diaper'd with pleaſant flowers, " and chequer'd with delightful objects; " there the pretty ſongſters of the ſpring, " with their various muſick, ſeem to wel-

§ *Sec.* 26.

" come

" come me as I paſs along; the earth puts DIAL.
" forth her primroſes and pretty dayſies to II.
" behold me; the air blows with gentle
" zephyrs to refreſh me; here I find ſuch
" pleaſure with a *guſto relevante*, that I could
" bid adieu to *Alcinous*, *Adonis*, and *Lu-*
" *cullus*'s gardens, and wou'd not envy the
" *Theſſalians* for their *Tempe*." Now, by what way an Author, that can fall into this childiſhneſs, cou'd come to a tenth edition, as the title page does here tell us, I cannot imagine.

CLEAND. Certainly, Sir, you muſt have heard that, notwithſtanding *Marcellus* built a Temple to Virtue, and another to Honour, and order'd 'em ſo, that one could not paſs to that of Honour, but through the other of Virtue, yet ſince his days people get in another way. That is, honour and reputation are ſometimes had without true merit, not only by others, but by Authors too. But to let that paſs, I believe I can give you here in *Maynwaringe*, [h] ſuch another piece of eloquence as ſhall outvie your *Grotto*. I will only read you a few lines. Speaking *of ſickneſs and a valetudinary ſtate*, he ſays thus: " The lilly and
" the roſe, that nature planted in the high-
" eſt mount, to ſhew the world her pride
" and glory; is now blaſted and wither'd

[h] His Book of Preſervation of Health.

DIAL. II. " like long-blown flowers. The eye that " flaſh'd as lightning, is now like the o- " pacous body of a thick cloud; that roll'd " from eaſt to weſt ſwifter than a celeſtial " orb, is now tired and weary but ſtanding " ſtill; that penetrated the centre of ano- " ther microcoſm, has loſt its planetary " influence, and is become obtuſe and " dull. The hollow-ſounding breaſt that " echoed to the chanting bird, and war- " bled forth delightful tunes, now runs " diviſions with coughing ſtrains, and pauſes " with a deep-fetch'd ſigh for breath to " repeat thoſe notes again, *&c.*" It is hard to ſay, whether ſuch Styles ſhou'd be counted Poetry or Proſe. But I am ſure they are not good Poetry, and are very bad Proſe. This amphibious way of writing is neither one nor the other of thoſe two between which there ſeems no medium; and perhaps was not thought of when the anſwer of Sir *H. Savil* or *Spelman* (I forget which of 'em) was thought a very pleaſant one, who, being asked his opinion of Poetry, replied, that of all ways of writing he liked it the beſt next to Proſe.

EUDOX. *Ariſtotle*[1] remarks, that people having obſerved the very idleſt fables of poets did extremely pleaſe, by the agreeableneſs of their expreſſions, eloquence was

[1] Rhet. L. 3. c. 1.

at

at first altogether of a poetical turn, as that of *Gorgias*; and he adds, that the unskilful still thought florid poetical writers the best; but that the mistake is clear from the event, since even poets had moderated that way of expression in *Tragedies*, as very improper in discourse. Upon which he concludes, it is ridiculous to imitate those who themselves no longer use that way of writing[k]. DIAL. II.

CRITOM. What displeases me the most in that kind of Style, is, that it has, as was already observed, rather an effeminate, than a manly beauty. Give me a strong vigorous Style.

EUDOX. As strong as you please, provided it does not, as I precautioned *Cleander*, come to mistaking rage for strength, or to an odd mixture of fierceness, with something of that Poetick way of which we were speaking. Mr. *Cowley*[l] says of *Virgil*,

He brought green Poësie to her perfect age,
And made that Art which was a Rage.

It looks to me as if some Authors wou'd quite reverse the matter, and make Prose

[k] *Quamobrem ridiculum est imitari eos qui ipsi non amplius illo utuntur modo.* Arist. Ibid.

[l] In the first of his Miscellanies.

from

DIAL. II. from Art, turn to Rage. An inſtance of this ranting Style I met with yeſterday, at the very opening of this *Religio Stoici*. He begins in theſe terms. "Albeit man "be but a ſtatue of duſt, kneaded with "tears, moved by the hid engines of his "reſtleſs paſſions, a clod of earth which "the ſhorteſt fever can burn to aſhes, and "the leaſt ſhower of rheums waſh away "to nothing: yet makes he as much noiſe "in the world, as if both the Globes, thoſe "glorious twins, had been unwomb'd from "that formleſs Chaos, by the midwifry "of his wit. He ſpeaks thunder, looks "lightnings, breaths ſtorms, and by the "eloquence of his own vanity, perſuades "himſelf that his commands are able to "unhinge the Poles."

CLEAND. Such periods make me think of *Ben. Johnſon*, who, as Mr. *Dryden* ſays, in one of his *Eſſays* [m], in reading ſome of the bombaſt ſpeeches of *Macbeth*, uſed to ſay that it was *Horrour*.

EUDOX. The ſecond paragraph of this ſame book begins little better, tho' with ſomething leſs terrour. "Albeit regiments "of arguments levied from the ſtately fa-"brick of heaven's arched pend, and from "the inimitable embroidery of earth's flowry

[m] At the end of the Conqueſt of *Granada*.

"boul,

" boul, *&c.*" You have a world more of this ſort of eloquence in that rambling Stoick. His Style is like his Religion, made up of ſtarts of fancy, libertiniſm of incoherent notions, indigeſted words and ideas. How much better do thoſe write, who, tempering the heat of fancy with cool reflections upon the rules of art, go ſmoothly on to their point. DIAL. II.

CLEAND. It is doubtleſs better, as long as too much of art does not deſtroy nature. Waters are never ſo good as from the very ſpring, and we are more pleaſed with a fountain riſing in the midſt of its native pebbles, and artleſs greens, than when it rattles down into a marble baſon. I am for *Juvenal*'s[n]

Quanto præſtantius eſſet
Numen aquæ viridi ſi margine clauderet undas
Herba, nec ingenuum vitiarent marmora tophum.

And thus, is there not ſomething more pleaſing in a free natural vein, than in a conſtrain'd artificial Style?

EUDOX. But if you obſerve narrowly, you will find none depart more from na-

[n] Satyra. 3. ver. 18.

DIAL. II. ture, than those who take the liberties I speak of. Or, if you will have me answer with the words of the same Author, I will affirm, that nature and wisdom, or art, never give opposite rules.

[o] *Nunquam aliud natura, aliud sapientia dicit.*

And then it will be found, that as waters often grow clearer and better by their course; so natural methods of writing improve through a course of Rules.

CRITOM. I am not an enemy to either nature or art. I only fear the criticks will have Authors so nice, as to smooth their Styles into meer flatness. A roughness is better than to have things polished till they are too thin and weak. Amongst the many *Jupiters* of antiquity (and you know *Varro* will not compute for less than three hundred) one was *Jupiter Philius*, or of friendship, and was commonly made with a rough philosophical head. Perhaps, says my Antiquary, [p] because friendship is oftner found among them, than among sprucer fellows. Thus, methinks, Authors of a rougher mien, are oftner found truer to reason than your trimm'd and smooth-faced Styles.

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[o] Sat. 14. ver. 320.

[p] O. *W.* of Coins and Medals, Part 2. Chap. 6.

EUDOX.

DIAL. II.

EUDOX. Yet you are not to omit obſerving, that the very *Jupiter* you ſpeak of, join'd a ſmiling countenance with his rugged head. From whence I may infer, in the like method, that a true reaſonable writer, muſt not have a frowning look, and that if he muſt not be gimp, yet he muſt not be horrid. And if you love *Mythological* applications, I will mind you of the ſtrife between *Neptune* and *Minerva*, which of the two ſhou'd give the name to *Athens*, which they jointly built. It was in fine agreed, the name ſhou'd be given by the party that ſhou'd beſtow the better gift upon the new city. Whereupon *Neptune* ſtrikes the earth, and up ſtarts a horſe for war. *Minerva* raiſed an olive-tree. This was judged the better gift, and the town was call'd by her name. Here a thorough-paced *Mythologiſt* wou'd, I believe, aſſure you it was to ſignify, beſides many other things, that the ſmoothneſs of oil is a better emblem of eloquence (whereof *Athens* was to be the ſeat) than all the ſprightlineſs of a prancing, foaming horſe.

CLEAND. But hold, Sir, I ſuppoſe, no farther ſtreſs is put upon that kind of *Allegory*, than to give your thought and our diſcourſe, a little variety. For thoſe *Allegories* are very pliable things, and a *Mythologiſt* of a different temper, or the ſame in

a

DIAL. II.

a different humour, wou'd tell you, that *Minerva* her ſelf, the goddeſs of Eloquence, is repreſented with a helmet, a ſpear, and *Meduſa*'s dreadful head. Very improper emblems of ſmoothneſs.

EUDOX. Not only I put no farther ſtreſs upon ſuch applications, but even I will own, that upon the whole buſineſs of *Mythology*, I am much pleaſed, but little convinced with all the wit of our admirable *Lord Bacon* upon that ſubject [q].

CRITOM. However, it cannot be denied but there is often ſomething very becoming in a manly roughneſs, and that ſome Authors in the deſign'd fierceneſs of their looks, have a pleaſing aſpect, as *Taſſo* [r] ſays of *Dorinda*,

Armò d' orgoglio il bel volto, e ſi compiacque
Rigido farlo, e pur rigido piacque.

With pride and fierceneſs ſhe her beauty arm'd,
But in her looks both pride and fierceneſs charm'd.

And to uſe a different compariſon, there is often a hard and rugged Style which includes the moſt exquiſite thoughts, as ſome fine fruits are within a hard and rugged ſhell.

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[q] Libro *de ſapientiâ veterum.*
[r] *Gieruſalemme.* Canto 2. Stanza 38.

EUDOX.

EUDOX. Juſt, I ſuppoſe, as there is ſometimes a ſharp wit under a thick and hard skull. As I remember to have read in *Janus Nicius Erythræus*, who was pleas'd ſo to metamorphoſe his name from *John Victor Roſſi*; [f] that *Nicholas Richardi*, who was counted a very great wit, had a vaſt head, and ſo thick a skull, that with one blow he would break peach-ſtones upon it. Yet this will not make a hard skull paſs for a commendation. And though a thin, ſoft skull, is as little a compliment, yet I have heard of a very tender one that incloſed a ſharp and ſolid wit. And if you are not tired with theſe kind of applications, I will add, in one more; that fierce, rough, and dreadful writers, put me in mind of the humour of *Baſſianus* or *Caracalla* Emperor, who becauſe he was ugly, endeavoured to make himſelf terrible. Yet it is related of him, he was ſo cowardly that he durſt not put on true armour, but had his clothes made ſo like armour, that he was almoſt thought armed. In this exceſs of fear, when he paſſed through *Macedonia*, he wou'd imitate *Alexander*, and be call'd *Magnus*, and at *Ilium* he wou'd needs be *Achilles*. Thus, it is often a natural conſciouſneſs of a weak reaſon, that makes many ſeek to cover it with dreadful words.

[f] In his *Pinacothecâ*.

But

DIAL. II. But then if cowards are never more certainly diſcover'd at laſt, than by too great an affectation of Courage and *Heroiſm*, thoſe authors are never more certainly found weak, than by too great an affectation of ſtrength. Methinks I wou'd have ſuch Authors farther imitate *Baſſianus*, and ſtamp their books, as he did his Medals, with a Lyon radiant with thunder in his mouth: And his own medals are obſerved [t] to be made frowning.

CLEAND. Or if you will give me leave to put in my thought, I wou'd have in the front of their works, one ſtand with a moſt terrible broad-brimm'd hat, and waiſt-belt, and write under theſe two verſes from the Prologue to the *Conqueſt of Granada*;

" It were a ſhame an author ſhou'd be kill'd
" Under the ſhelter of ſo broad a ſhield.

I am the more inclined to this fancy, becauſe if thoſe dreadful Styles ſhou'd gain repute, we ſhould certainly be forced to apply what follows in that *Prologue*, while thundering large words wou'd increaſe, as much as the hats, which made him ſay,

" The brims ſtill grew with ev'ry play they
" writ,
" And grew ſo large, they cover'd all the wit.

[t] Apud *O.W.* Part 2. Chap. 13. §. 3.

CRITOM.

CRITOM. All your pleaſantry upon thoſe *terrible* authors, may paſs if you carry your ſeverity no farther than *Balzac*[u], who ridicules an over-fierce Pedant, that, as he expreſſes it, was for breaking guittars and flutes, and wou'd have no muſick but drums and trumpets, and have nothing of a milder ſound than

Inferni raptoris equos, afflataque curru
Sidera Tenario.

CLEAND. I wonder to hear *Balzac* cited againſt that ſort of writers; for, as far as I remember, he has a rattling kind of a pen.

EUDOX. Yet it cannot be denied but he had many true notions of a ſmoother and milder ſtrain than his own. To mention no other place of his, you may ſee it here in a place not far from that mention'd by *Critomachus*; it lately fell into my hands. Speaking of ſome *Iambicks* made by one *de la Caſa*, "I will own (ſays he[w]) they are not "ſublime, they have nothing of the tem-"peſtuous and thundering, as the Pedant "calls it. But methinks the Sea in a rage, "and the Heavens in a flame, are not the "moſt agreeable objects. Muſt we not "eſteem the clearneſs of fountains, and

[u] Oeuvres Diverſes. Entr. 4. Chap. 5.
[w] Ibid. Chap. 8.

DIAL. II. "the ſereneneſs of a ſummer's day, becauſe "that Doctor likes nothing but obſcurity "and ſtorms?" Hereupon, if you will give me leave to paraphraſe the

video meliora, proboque,
Deteriora ſequor,

of *Ovid*, I will ſay,

"Thus men in Styles, as in a virtuous
"courſe,
"Approve the better, but embrace the
"worſe.

CRITOM. Pray, Sir, reach me your *Cowley* there, and I will ſhew you a place in the preface which will, perhaps, make you abate ſomething of your rigour in theſe points. Here, ſpeaking of Mr. *Cowley*'s verſe, "If in ſome places (ſays Dr. *Sprat*) "they ſeem not ſo ſmooth as ſome would "have them, it was his choice, not his "fault. He knew that in diverting mens "minds, there ſhou'd be the ſame variety as "in the proſpects of their eyes; where a "rock, a precipice, or a riſing wave, is "often more delightful than a ſmooth even "ground, or a calm ſea."

EUDOX. Dr. *Sprat* is ſo good a judge, and himſelf ſo good a pattern of Style, (as far as I can gueſs by that preface, which is the only thing of him I have ſeen) that I ſhall not in the leaſt queſtion what he there in-

intends: which amounts to no more, than that ſometimes a variety, even of roughet numbers, has its proper place; not that we are to be pleaſed with a continual *foam* of Style, if I may uſe the expreſſion. DIAL. II.

CRITOM. And on the other ſide, a writer will be ſure to diſpleaſe, if he goes always on in a hum-drum way, and unleſs he takes a little ſcope both in thought and expreſſion.

EUDOX. But ſtill the ſcope muſt have it's bounds. Thoughts muſt agree with one another, and the expreſſion with the ſubject. Nor muſt they think the nobleneſs of a Style conſiſts in the unuſual ſound of words.

CRITOM. Yet your *Ariſtotle*, Sir, as you are pleaſed to call *Carteſius* mine, is far from denying the agreeableneſs of ſurprizes which are the natural effect of *metaphors*, *tranſlatitious terms*, *foreign words*, or the uſe of known words when taken in a different ſenſe than one wou'd have imagined.

EUDOX. I could eaſily ſhew that *Ariſtotle* requires a great moderation in that kind. For although he grants that way of expreſſion is often requiſite to make the Style great and noble, yet he is poſitive that if it is immoderately uſed, it becomes ridiculous.

DIAL. II. diculous. And this (which is remarkable) he ſays ſpeaking of Poetry [x], where a greater liberty is eaſily allowed. In his Rhetorick, he not only ſays thoſe liberties muſt not be uſed immoderately, but expreſſly that they muſt be taken ſeldom and in few places, and that *tranſlatitious* terms muſt not be far-fetch'd, but from objects of a like nature, and which are allyed together, or, as it were, a-kin [y]. In which *Cicero* perfectly agrees with him, and expreſſes this latter part, by ſaying that what is called *tranſlation* of terms (that is, transferring them from their proper to another ſignification) ſhould be very baſhful, and ſeem rather to be led, than to have ruſh'd in, and to have come rather by intreaty than by violence, or to have begg'd, rather than forced an admittance [z].

CRITOM. Let not that at leaſt be called forced, which is only carried up equal to the proper force of the thought. Let not things paſs for extravagant, becauſe they are extraordinary. Let it be reflected on too,

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[x] *Qui metaphoris & è peregrinâ linguâ petitis vocibus, reliquiſque, id genus immodicè utitur, & qui deditâ operâ ut riſum moveat, idem effecerit.* Poët. cap. 22.

[y] *Linguis & duplicibus nominibus, & factis, rarò & paucis locis utendum .... præterea verò non longè oportet, ſed ex cognatis & conformibus transferre.* Rhet. lib. 3. cap. 2.

[z] *Etenim verecunda debet eſſe tranſlatio, ut deducta eſſe in alienum locum, non irruiſſe; atque ut precariò non vi veniſſe videatur.* Cic. de Oratore, lib. 3. poſt medium.

that

that we are in a ſtrange miſliking age, which finds fault with every thing; ſo that there is no way to gain reception in the world, but by the commendation of novelty. And though indeed criticks deſerve little regard, yet they have by their numbers brought a neceſſity upon authors. They muſt conform to the prevailing genius of the times, or let writing alone; for you might as well walk the ſtreets with an old-faſhion'd Coat, as appear in print with an antiquated Style: and it were equally ridiculous to dreſs and to write as they did in the politeſt days of our *Edwards*.

EUDOX. It were ſo. Nor would I have you queſtion but I am of *Favorinus*'s opinion, who counſelled an affected youngſter to live like the *Antients*, but to talk like *Moderns*[a]. For our language is better, though our morals are worſe. When I ſpeak againſt novelty of Style, I do not mean the language muſt be as old as *Chaucer*'s. Though his ſenſe ſtands good ſtill, (for ſenſe is never out-dated) yet his words do not. Theſe are ſtrangely dependent of cuſtom, which has abſolute power in the change of language[b]. It is viſible in *Engliſh* and *French*, as we lately obſerved

[a] *Vive moribus præteritis, utere verbis præſentibus.* A. Gell. Noct. lib. 1. cap. 20.

[b] *Conſuetudo tum omnium domina rerum, tum maximè verborum eſt.* Idem, lib. 12. cap. 13.

DIAL. II. in reading together in the country, the ſecond Dialogue between *Ariſte* and *Eugene*: whoſe author, by the by, was very uncivilly uſed by your friends. Amongſt his other enemies, there is in the treatiſe of *Idleneſs* [c], a very cholerick gentlewoman, to whom (as an ingenious friend of mine took notice) the author has given all the wit of the company. She, as far as I can gueſs, would needs have him hang'd for his grammatical remarks. There is a duller gentleman in the Dialogue, by name *Zeroander*, who propoſes a leſſer revenge, to which *Angelica* ſubſcribes. However, ſhe is much too angry for her name and character, and I cou'd not but cry out,

Tantæne animis cœleſtibus iræ?

Can heav'nly minds ſuch angry thoughts contain?

CRITOM. As I am willing to grant you have a great deal of reaſon to defend the Critick *Bouhours*, when unjuſtly and rudely attack'd; ſo, dear Sir, a little more impartiality if you pleaſe, as to our preſent ſubject. You allow words perpetually change, and that the preſent uſe is the only rule of language; and yet you complain of the novelty of authors.

[c] De la Pareſſe, Entr. 2.

EUDOX.

EUDOX. Yes, Sir, becauſe their novelty is too ſingular in its kind. 'Tis true an author's language ſhou'd be of a freſh ſtamp, and yet the perfection of his language conſiſts not in an affectation of new words, or an unuſual management of terms. Expreſſions are not better becauſe ſingular, nor does he write the beſt *Engliſh* that has moſt words borrow'd from foreign languages or objects, or who phraſes his thoughts in the moſt uncommon turn. The greateſt art of expreſſion conſiſts in a judicious choice and application of the moſt ordinary terms, that where the language is moſt artificial, there it may appear moſt natural, becauſe the art is concealed [d]. As art is never greater than when you cannot diſtinguiſh it from Nature. Which particularly happens in that certain eaſy ſmoothneſs of writing, where the author ſeems not to have ſought for his expreſſions, but to have taken them as they flowed in of themſelves. You would think nothing could be more eaſy than to write as they do; nothing however is harder upon the tryal [e].

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[d] *Latere & diſſimulari debet ornatus, uti ne conſilia, conquiſitaque oratio videatur: ſed obvia, ſed innata, & ſed ſponte illaborateque ſuppetens ... latet autem ſi lectis è medio atque ex uſu communi vocabulis componatur oratio.* Ariſt. Rhet. l. 3. c. 2.

[e] *Imitabilis illa quidem videtur eſſe exiſtimanti, ſed nihil eſt experienti minus.* Cic. de Oratore, lib. 3. poſt medium.

DIAL. II.

CRITOM. Still methinks that ſweet eaſineſs you ſo much commend, falls not in ſo naturally with our *Engliſh* tongue or humour. At leaſt it is not ſo great, as that elevated way of writing, that noble air which riſes up to the *Sublime* of *Longinus*.

EUDOX. High-ſounding expreſſions are no certain arguments of greatneſs of thoughts, nor is it a commendation to be great in diſproportion. A ſtudy'd grandeur of expreſſion is very apt to lead too far, nor is it a leſs fault to be too high, than too low for the ſubject[f]. Believe me, Sir, you will find upon examination (and there is a great difference between examining and criticizing) you will find thoſe pregnant fancies often have very odd productions, while the heat of their imagination preſſes them on ſo violently that they are ſeldom exact. If they would take *Horace*'s and *Quintilian*'s advice[g], in keeping their works till the warmth of compoſition is cooler, they wou'd make a conſiderable change; and looking them over as readers rather than as authors, they would cut off ſeveral places, wherein they wou'd find, what I think *Callicrates* calls *monſtroſity of thought*,

[f] *Neque humilia neque ſupra dignitatem elata.* Ariſt. Rhet. lib. 3. cap. 2.

[g] *Ut refrigerato inventionis amore, diligentius repetitos tanquam lector perpenderet.* Quint. ad Tryph.

CRI-

DIAL. II.

CRITOM. As for that matter, there is no author so accurate but might change several places, and cut others intirely off. Yet there must, I suppose, be some end of Accuracy as well as of Liberty [h]. To go to that rigour, nothing shou'd be ever publish'd because it may still be mended. Probably also, they wou'd make new faults in correcting the former; and the very anxiety of being exact, would make them most accurately flat [i]. Whereas a certain unconstrain'd freedom, gives a mighty vigour.

CLEAND. I must own I have that notion still hanging upon me, notwithstanding the change I find in these matters. And to tell you the truth, *Eudoxus*, I do not yet well conceive in what the exactness you so much require, nor in what that accuracy you complain is wanting, does consist.

EUDOX. I have already given several hints, examples and authorities, that in part explain in what it does, and many of what it does not consist in. As indeed the most perfect things can hardly be explain'd but by *negatives*. I will add now in short, that it con-

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[h] *Tamen in hâc ipsâ curâ est aliquid satis.* Quint. lib. 8. Proœm.

[i] *Quod etiamsi idcirco fieret ut semper optimis uterentur, abominanda tamen haec infelicitas erat quæ & cursum dicendi refrænat, & calorem cogitationis extinguit morâ & diffidentiâ.* Ibid.

sists

DIAL. II.

ſiſts in that equality of Style, which every where maintaining it ſelf with a juſt proportion, ſeems neither ſtudied nor neglected; and without any ſcrupulous niceties in the diſpoſition of words, has ſtill that order of them which makes the harmony of a period. They ſhou'd neither be looſe, nor hamper'd as it were, or chain'd up to the laws of verſe [k], as *Cicero* declares. *Ariſtotle* gives the ſame rule, and adds the reaſon why the Style ſhou'd neither be *metrical* nor void of regular numbers. Becauſe that, ſays he [l], makes a Poem of your diſcourſe, and appearing feigned, is leſs apt to perſuade; and moreover diſtracts your thoughts while it ſets you upon an attentive expectation of the like cadence. On the other ſide, where there is no regard to numbers, the expreſſions cannot properly be finiſh'd. You may remember we were lately reading *Iſocrates*, and obſerved that his numbers, though at firſt ſo ſweet and melodious, began ſoon to diſpleaſe, becauſe too conſtantly falling into the like rolling of ſound. On the contrary, a care-

[k] *Neque alligata ſint certâ aliquâ lege verſûs, neque ita ſoluta ut vagentur.* Cic. de Orat. l. 3. p. med.

[l] *Formam elocutionis oportet neque metricam eſſe, neque numerorum expertem. Illud enim minus aptum ad perſuadendum, nam eſſe fictum videtur, & ſimul avocat. Nam facit ut attendatur quando ſimile redibit. Quod autem ſine numero eſt, ſine termino eſt ..... quamobrem numerum habere oportet orationem, non metrum. Alioquin poema erit neque tamen numeros exquiſitos.* Ariſt. Rhet. lib. 3. cap. 8.

leſs

leſs jumbling of words together makes an ungrateful noiſe and diſorder. Then beſides: words ſhould come to the ear with a full, but not with a frightful ſound. 'Tis true, ſays *Tully*[m], harmony of Style cannot be tryed ſo well by rules of art, as judged of by a kind of natural perception. Yet generally ſpeaking, it is, as I may ſay, nothing but the hurry of thought which makes the expreſſion unequal. This cannot well chooſe but be congruous, when that is digeſted. Where the Idea is accurate, the terms will be ſo too; and wherever you find the words hobble, you may conclude the notion was lame; otherwiſe they wou'd both have had an equal and graceful pace. But beſides this care of the harmony, a much greater is to be had in the other parts of a judicious accuracy in writing. I will touch upon them rather in another man's words than my own, both becauſe he is counted a very good judge in theſe matters, and becauſe I deſpair of expreſſing what I have meant hitherto by this accuracy, in better or equal terms. Give me leave then to read you a page or two I have here tranſlated from *Rapin's Inſtructions for Hiſtory*. For what he applies there to writing of Hiſtory, is methinks proportionably true in other kinds of writing.

DIAL. II.

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[m] *Non arte aliquâ perpenditur, ſed quodam quaſi naturali ſenſu judicatur.* Cic. ſupra.

DIAL. II. "To write ſenſibly and judiciouſly, "ſays he [n], is to go on directly to your "point, in whatever matter, without "ſtraying aſide, or amuſing your ſelf in the "way: It is to deliver things with a kind "of wiſdom and command, which aban-"dons not it ſelf to the heat of imagina-"tion or vivacity of wit: It is to know "how to ſuppreſs whatever is ſuperfluous "in the expreſſion, as are thoſe adverbs "and epithets, which leſſen things by ex-"aggerating of them: To leave nothing that "is idle, languiſhing or uſeleſs: To cut "off generouſly whatever ought not to be "ſaid, however beautiful it may ſeem: "To give always leſs to luſtre than to ſo-"lidity: Not to ſhew fire and heat, where "all ſhou'd be cool and ſedate: To examine "all your thoughts, and meaſure all your "words, by that exactneſs of ſenſe and "diſcretion, from which nothing eſcapes "which is not accurate and judicious: "'Tis, in fine, to be able to reſiſt the "temptation we naturally have to ſhew "our wit; as does that impertinent hiſto-"rian, who [o] in the defeat of the *Parthians* "by the emperor *Severus*, makes *Oſroës* "retire to a grott, ſhaded with the laurel and "the myrtle; and ſtriving to be agreeable, "becomes ridiculous; which is the moſt

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[n] *Rapin* Inſtruct. pour l'Hiſt. §. 3.
[o] *Apud* Lucianum *de Conſcrib. Hiſt.*

"ſlip-

" ſlippery place in which an Author can fall. This ſenſible and wiſe character of wit, is a kind of attention over one's ſelf, which allows of no exaggeration, and is upon a conſtant guard againſt all thoſe bold imaginations, to which your flaſhy and fertile wits are ſubject; thus diſpatching great matters in few words, like *Saluſtius*, who calls councils, gives battles, takes towns, ſubdues kingdoms, with a ſhortneſs of diſcourſe, and rapidity of expreſſion which you underſtand by a hint, *&c.*" DIAL. II.

THUS *Rapin*; and he had cited a little before, a place of *Quintilian* [p], which comprizes the matter in ſhort, ſaying: A Style ſhou'd be great, but not exceſſive; ſublime, not abrupt; ſtrong, not raſh; grave, not dull; gay, not flaunting; full, but not ſwell'd.

CRITOM. Now I ſee you are in the high road of all thoſe nice precepts, which are ſo admirable in ſpeculation, but can never be brought to practice. If that is the Accuracy you require, I will grant even *Callicrates* has it not. But then he may ſtill take in with the beſt Authors. For at that

[p] *Magna, non nimia; ſublimis, non abrupta; fortis, non temeraria; ſevera, non triſtis; gravis, non tarda; lata, non luxurioſa; plena, non tumida.* Quint. lib. 2. cap. 10.

ſevere

DIAL. II. ſevere rate, none of them all can maintain their credit. In earneſt, Sir, let me tell you, you carry things to a great rigour.

EUDOX. Yet, Sir, I propoſe no greater exactneſs than the ableſt men have always judged requiſite in publick ſpeeches, where the very delivery hides many of the faults. Sure then, it is far more neceſſary in writings, which want the recommendation of a graceful action, and are read with more reflection than can accompany a ſpeech, where the attention is ſtill carried on without the leiſure of an examination. Whence it often happens, that what pleaſed when firſt ſpoken in publick, ſeems very inſipid when read in private.

CRITOM. Orators have indeed the advantage of action, which gives both life and vigour to the compoſition. And therefore I cou'd never yet ſee what need there was of being ſo moroſely nice in all thoſe rules and precepts. As for thoſe able men, I am inclined to think they recommended ſo great an Accuracy, rather to ſhew how far they puſhed their reflections, than that they thought them neceſſary. Some at leaſt, are ſo happily born, as to ſupply, by the native force of wit, whatever want of art; and need not mind thoſe troubleſome rules, having from nature all the exactneſs that one can reaſonably deſire.

DIAL. II.

EUDOX. Alas, Sir, thoſe *happy nativities* are very rare. They have, ſays *Quintilian*[q], many imitators of their negligence and faults, but few equals in their wit. Received cuſtoms muſt be conformed to in life and manners, and if ſometimes *Socrates* and *Ariſtippus* have neglected them, it is not every one, ſays *Tully*, muſt take the ſame liberty. He adds, they might aſſume that licence which they had gain'd by other great and divine indowments[r]. Thus in expreſſions, and irregular ſtrokes, a *Horace* or a *Virgil*, a *Cowley* or a *Dryden*, may ſecurely take a freedom which will not be allowable to inferior wits. Yet it ſhall be theſe very liberties people will needs be imitating. Thus in *Callicrates* it is, that very turn of expreſſion, which I beg leave to diſlike, that will be fondly imitated by many, without his genius to ſupport it. In him it is ſomething genuine, and ſeems to ſpring from the root. In others it will be affected. Their ſhort ſentences will not ſhoot out like natural branches, but ſtick like pieces nailed here and there to a ſtump of a tree. To my knowledge it has already ſpoil'd ſome young men of good hopes. They loſe their own growth by

[q] *Plurimos habent ſimiles negligentiæ ſuæ, pauciſſimos naturæ.* Quint. lib. 2. cap. 11.

[r] *Magnis enim illi & divinis bonis hanc licentiam aſſequebantur.* Cic. de officiis, Lib. 1.

un-

DIAL. II. unſucceſsfully grafting from him. 'Twas ſomething of this which, as I have read ſomewhere, made a judicious man ſay, *Voiture* ſpoilt near half the *French* writers. Thoſe indeed I chiefly ſpeak of, draw nearer to the Style of *Balſac*, which an ingenious acquaintance of mine ſays, looks like a continual *Gaſconade*. They are full as much for big ſort of phraſes, which are flung out at random, and of which the very beſt are only good by chance [f]. They ſeem to pen down their thoughts at a venture, firſt chuſing their words by the bulk and ſound, and then forcing 'em into a pretended context; though in reality their very way and jog of writing, naturally throws them out of true connection.

CRITOM. At leaſt you will not, I hope, make *Callicrates* anſwerable for his miſtaken pretenders to his Style.

EUDOX. By no means. But I am apt to think it is not a very right one, ſince it ſo naturally leads to the wrong.

CRITOM. But what do you think particularly of thoſe parts of his book, which are by way of dialogue; where the very

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[f] *Sententiæ grandes quarum optima quæque à periculo petitur.* Quint. Lib. 2. Cap. 11.

character

character of familiar diſcourſe allows a greater freedom? 'Tis in them one cannot but admire to ſee the perſons he introduces, take up one another ſo wittily. DIAL. II.

EUDOX. I fear it is a kind of wit which is not altogether ſo natural in common diſcourſe. Methinks too, he makes his gentlemen enter upon matters in a hurry, and as if they were reſolved to run one another immediately down into conviction, by the precipitouſneſs of their expreſſions. Were it not much more natural to begin with temper, and riſe by degrees, and prepare a concluſion, than to enter by a ſtart, purſue it by ſpurts, and ſnap off on a ſudden? Theſe are only doubts, I propoſe, not aſſertions; and to them I will add another. After a few words have paſt between the interlocutors, is it according to art, to make one of them begin to engroſs the diſcourſe to himſelf?

CRITOM. Why, Sir, wou'd you have him count them out their words, and make their ſentences of an equal length, for fear one ſhou'd not have his ſhare of talk? It is common in all converſation, for perſons to advance now and then ſuch propoſitions as require a longer proof, and to be deduced ſomething more at large.

DIAL. II.

EUDOX. It is ſo; and therefore my doubt is chiefly concerning the way. He does it, by immediately making one prefer, or the other deſire his attention, becauſe he has a great deal to ſay, and his head is full of matter. Then he ſets him a talking with a witneſs. Thus *Sophronius*, in one of the dialogues, talks ſo long for eight or nine large pages together, that he has not breath left to give *Philander* good night: and ſo they part.

CRITOM. Now, *Eudoxus*, for all the modeſty of your only propoſing doubts, I perceive you are turning it to a banter. 'Tis the beſt method of making a breach in a ſolid reputation. I hope you will not be affronted if I obſerve to you, that exceptious humours never gain their point ſo ſurely as by ridiculing.

EUDOX. Believe me, that is far from my deſign at preſent, and you know it is never much my humour; though I ſee no need, in matters of this nature, to be always poſitively grave. However, at our next meeting, we will, if you pleaſe, purſue the matter, without making uſe of jeſts for arguments. At preſent you muſt give me leave to go to my *Club*, where I promiſed to be a little ſooner than ordinary.

CRITOM. You know you may uſe all freedom with us.

CLEAND. And you might be ſure we never deſigned our viſit ſhould be the leaſt hindrance to your other concerns.

THE

THIRD DIALOGUE,

BETWEEN

CRITOMACHUS, EUDOXUS, *and* CLEANDER.

CRITOM. WHAT now, *Eudoxus*, are you going abroad? Have you a mind to decline any farther debate, and are your critical niceties at an end?

EUDOX. No, Sir. Not expecting you quite ſo ſoon, I was going no farther than a-croſs the ſtreet, and had given orders to my man to call me at your arrival. The ceremony-viſit I was upon, may as well be put off till another time. So, if you pleaſe, we will walk up to my library. Beſides a reſerve of former reflections, I have made ſome others ſince our laſt conference.

CLEAND. There's *Callicrates*'s book ready, I ſee, upon your table. But who is

is that other juſt by him, mark'd with ſo many papers in different places? DIAL. III.

EUDOX. 'Tis a book I have been looking into ſince our diſcourſe upon the Style of *Callicrates*. Have you never ſeen *Feltham*'s *Reſolves*?

CRITOM. I ſuppoſe you have no great matter of advantage to be drawn from any ſort of compariſon between him and *Callicrates*.

CLEAND. He draws near to a hundred years old [a]: and ſure *Callicrates*'s new Style has not only a freſher, but alſo a more ſolid complection.

EUDOX. I ſhall leave that to others determination, when I have enter'd a few remarks upon the cauſe. It might be proved by ſeveral examples, that flaſhy Authors are not always ſo inventive, as one might be apt to think at the firſt reading; and that ſometimes they only renew antiquated methods. *Feltham*, Sir, as old as he is, writes in almoſt as new a Style as *Callicrates*. Their expreſſions are often extremely parallel. Give me leave to read you the ſhort view I have drawn up from ſome I

[a] I have ſeen two editions, one *An.* 1631. another *An.* 1661.

DIAL. III. met with, at little more endeavour than turning over the pages at a venture. I will begin with *Callicrates*, and with your leave, I will repeat some of the expressions I observ'd to you in *Critomachus*'s absence.

Callicrates.

" DESPAIR casts a gloominess upon the " soul, and lays her in a dungeon, beyond " the notion of pre-existence.... To clap " the extinguisher of honour, upon our " vital flame, rather than to let it burn " blue, and lie agonizing in the socket, " till it goes out in no perfume..... I find " the satisfaction of a prospect, musick, or " perfume, is not thinner for being beaten " .... If we wou'd only conquer our imagi- " nation, we might die easier of a fagot, than " of a fever, ... because it is better to have " a fire kindled without than within me.... " 'Tis good husbandry to nurse up the vital " flame as long as it will last,... To discharge " the last pulse in the face of death .... To " grapple handsomly with a disease.... The " taste and touch engross an object to them- " selves, and will not let the company share " with them. They take faster hold, it is true, " but they don't salute so ceremoniously " .... *Timotheus* the musician had a nearer " cut to the soul, and cou'd fleck a passion at " a stroke .... A smile breaks out with the " brightest distinction, and sits upon the coun- " tenance like a glory ..... The language

" of

" of the face is the ſhort-hand of the mind DIAL.
" &c. Pleaſing retroſpections and comforta- III.
" ble preſages, are admirable opiates ... &c."

LET theſe ſuffice from *Callicrates*. Now for the other.

Feltham's Reſolves [b].

" WHEN the guard of circumſpection is
" over, we lie ſpread to the ſhot of general
" danger .... Reſolution is the only marſhal
" that can keep nature in a decent order ...
" To convert diſcontentment into a dimp-
" ling joy .... I wiſh no man ſo ſpiritleſs, as
" to let all abuſes preſs the dullneſs of a
" willing ſhoulder .... I like that friendſhip,
" which by ſoft aſcenſion degrees itſelf in
" the ſoul .... To undreſs the brain, and
" make him fling off all thoſe phanatique
" toys, which gingle about his underſtand-
" ing. ... Thoſe joys claſp us with a friend-
" lier arm, that ſteal upon us when we
" look not for 'em. I will cozen my pain
" with careleſſneſs, and plump my joys
" by letting 'em ſurprize me. As I wou'd
" not neglect a ſudden good opportunity,
" ſo I wou'd not fury my ſelf in the ſearch ...
" Knowing our weakneſs, we muſt ſinew it
" with a ſtronger nerve ... Some joys wind
" downwards into ſharpful extremities .....
" Some calamities challenge the tribute of

[b] Reſolve 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 10, 11, 61.

DIAL. III. "a bleeding eye, becauſe they are unac-
"quainted with the gloominess of down-
"falls..... Nothing does more midnight the
"ſoul, than ſudden great misfortunes.
"They are the ſtrapadoes of human ſoul."

Now, Gentlemen, let me ask you if you perceive no likeneſs between their Styles, and the turn they give to their thoughts.

CRITOM. I muſt own the *Parallel* runs more exactly than I cou'd have imagined. And I perceive it is good to ſtand upon one's guard againſt the ſurprizing appearance of novelty.

CLEAND. And to take ſome leiſure moments, to obſerve more particularly thoſe methods of writing, which ſeem ſo pretty at firſt, and upon reflection and compariſon, fall ſoon to a lower eſteem, and at length into oblivion. For I ſee no reaſon why, between thoſe two Authors, there ſhou'd be any vaſt difference of fate in ſo great a likeneſs of Style.

EUDOX. I told you before, that I thought that ſort of Style wou'd not be of a laſting credit, becauſe it is too violent. And according to the proverb, *nihil violentum diuturnum*, no Author who writes unnaturally, whoſe expreſſions are apparently forced and artificial; and who clearly ſeems, as I think

think *Callicrates* expreſſes it, *to think upon the ſtretch*, can be long approved. It was upon this reaſon that [f] *Boileau* ſaid, one cou'd not tell whether *Balzac*'s credit wou'd laſt, becauſe, notwithſtanding the great eſteem he was in at firſt, ſeveral began ſoon to be diſabuſed; and now, ſays he, one can't pardon him that vitious induſtry of expreſſing his thoughts, quite a different way from all other men. So, what was firſt ſaid to praiſe him, is now a ſatyr upon him, that *never mortal talk'd like him.*

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CLEAND. I daily enter more into your opinion, that a natural ſmooth way of writing, is far preferable to that high-flown way. And I wiſh you wou'd let us wave, for the preſent, any farther particular reflections upon *Callicrates*, except in ſome few meerly incident paſſages, that we may inſiſt a little farther than hitherto, upon the particular rules of writing with true Elegance and Accuracy.

CRITOM. With all my heart. For I am ſenſible, that as perſonal quarrels hinder the right judging even of the plaineſt matters, ſo it is much harder to judge right of the true perfection of Style, while a par-

[f] Refl. 7. upon *Longinus*.

ticular

DIAL. III. ticular Author is criticized or defended, than when only incident examples are brought, independently of that kind of perſonal quarrel.

EUDOX. And therefore, taking the matter in the method propoſed, I muſt needs own again, I am altogether for the ſmooth, eaſy, natural Style. Eaſy, as I ſaid, in appearance, becauſe it is neither harſh nor affected. But ſuch, as (becauſe nothing can be ſmooth, that is not perfectly proportion'd and agreeing in its parts) will ever be found upon trial to require the moſt art and care in poliſhing.

CLEAND. I remember to that purpoſe, I lately took particular notice of a paſſage in the *Education of a Prince*, by *Chanteresine* (or whoever they were that join'd hands with him in the work) where [a] he diſtinguiſhes two ſorts of beauty in eloquence, whereof the one conſiſts in pretty and ſolid, but at the ſame time extraordinary and ſurprizing thoughts; ſuch as are frequent in *Seneca*, *Lucan*, and *Tacitus*; the other, in a natural air, in an eaſy, plain, but nicely accurate elegance of common *Images*, ſuch as give a lively, agreeable, genuine repreſentation; which is the character of *Virgil*. And he adds, that one may con-

[a] Part 2. §. 39.

clude,

clude, this ſort of eloquence is harder than the other, ſince of all Authors no one has been leſs perfectly reſembled by imitation, than *Virgil*. DIAL. III.

EUDOX. I am no great admirer of that company of deſperate eſſays, which the Authors are pleaſed to call, *the Education of a Prince*; whereas twenty other titles wou'd have been more proper. And I find, by the reflection you mention, that thoſe gentlemen ſeldom ſpeak truth without a mixture of error. For I can't grant that ſolidity is part of the true character of thoſe ſurprizing authors. As to the other part of the reflection, give me leave to add, that as I doubt whether even *Grotius*, or the other great admirers of *Lucan*, do at the bottom prefer him to *Virgil*; ſo I can hardly think you prefer the flaſhy, metaphorical Style, to ſuch a one, for example, as Sir *William Temple*'s.

CRITOM. You have certainly pitch'd upon an excellent author. But I can't aſſent to ſo great an admiration of him, as to make his Style a certain law. I am againſt any ſlavery to the points of nice rules, and I like thoſe who, like the *free-born* ſubjects of eloquence, ſhew that a greatneſs of genius has placed them above the ſervile fear of meaner Authors. Some, eſpecially confirm'd by the ſucceſs of applauded irregularities,

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larities, may ſecurely contemn the ſeverity of *Rule-ridden criticks*. And (beſides that fear is a deceitful teacher of right and wrong, as *Pliny*[*] ſays) I wiſh your moderate and ſmooth writers prove not often greater arguments of a ſhort reach, than of an accurate judgment.

EUDOX. And I wiſh on the other hand, that freedom and elevation were not ſubject to exceſſive deceits. In ſome men there is an artificial grandeur, which ſtrikes at firſt view, but you ſoon find it is only an affectation of a noble mien, a ſtudied aſſurance, a compoſed air and countenance. In others there is a real greatneſs under an equal, plain, eaſy mien, independent of gait and geſture, and the effect of a real nobility of birth and education, not the conſequence of a bought or borrowed *Title*. A ſolid merit breaks thro' the modeſty of their behaviour, and is at length acknowledged by all who converſe with them. 'Tis much the ſame in ways of writing.

CLEAND. But as ſome people dreſs in all the niceties of faſhion, and conſult their glaſs, till they ſet their faces in all the ſhapes of conſtraint and ſtudy, whereas a genteel negligence is far more graceful; ſo it is in writing, and expreſſing of thoughts.

[*] *Infidelis recti magiſter eſt metus.* Plin. Panegyr. Trajani.

And

And therefore, methinks, *Critomachus* may be allowed to plead againſt too great a ſeverity of rule. DIAL. III.

CRITOM. And truly, when I lately read in *Tacitus* [f], that under the Emperor *Tiberius* the commonwealth was as much plagued with laws, as it had been with vices before; well, ſaid I, 'tis to be fear'd we ſhall have reaſon to ſay as much under the tyranny of criticks. Laws and rules of writing will prove as prejudicial to the republick of learning, as all the faults of former Authors.

EUDOX. The ſame *Tacitus*, Sir, to reply in the like way, tells us, that *Otho*, the night before he killed himſelf, or (as ſome wou'd expreſs it) before *he died of his ſword*, counſel'd his nephew never to forget, nor yet to remember too much, that *Otho* the Emperor was his uncle [g]. Meaning, that the fond memory of his extraction ſhou'd not make him haughty; nor the forgetfulneſs of it betray him into baſeneſs. In the like manner (however unexpected may ſeem the application) if conſtant reflections upon Art and Rules ſhou'd not make one too mean in writing, ſo too great a forgetful-

[f] *Ut antehac flagitiis, ita tunc legibus laborabatur.* Lib. 3. Annal.

[g] *Patruum ſibi* Othonem *fuiſſe nec obliviſceretur unquam nec nimium meminiſſet.* Tacit. Hiſt. Lib. 12.

neſs

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neſs of 'em ſhou'd not make him over licentious.

CLEAND. What if one ſhou'd here appeal from *Tacitus* to *Saluſt*, and maintain, that as he ſays in the oration of *Catiline*, thoſe are always moſt in danger in a battle, who are moſt afraid [h]; ſo thoſe writers are moſt apt to fall into irreparable miſtakes who are moſt timorous.

EUDOX. I wou'd reply, that is the ſaying of a raſh and deſperate rebel. Nor can I think, that even one of your undaunted mind will deny a difference between fear and prudent caution. However, not to have *Critomachus* miſtake me, I declare again, I am not ſo rivetted to rules, as to think it is never poſſible to make a blameleſs fault. For tho' in morals there can be no free, and yet blameleſs fault, yet in writing there may: and I am ſo far from thinking a neglected period can never pleaſe even a ſevere judge, that I think it may be ſometimes more agreeable than the greateſt exactneſs. To ſuch happy miſtakes or faults I wou'd apply what *Martial* ſays of *Scævola*,

Major deceptæ fama eſt & gloria dextræ:
Si non erraſſet, fecerat illa minus.

[h] *Semper in prælio iis eſt maximum periculum qui maxime timent.* Saluſt. in Orat. Catil.

His

His erring hand has gain'd him greater fame:
He had done leſs, by taking truer aim.

CRITOM. The application of thoſe verſes puts me in mind of an *Emblem* or *Deviſe* of *Aretius*, which he takes from the diſtinction, and inequality of the fingers, that adds to the beauty of the hand. The *Motto* is, *diſparitate pulchrior*; ſo to expreſs that diverſity of wits and humours, makes human ſociety more agreeable. Without diſputing with *Bouhours*[1], whether this is an exact and regular Deviſe, I will apply it now to our preſent diſcourſe. For there is a certain inequality of Style which adds a charming grace.

EUDOX. Moſt certainly there is. But 'tis no leſs certain the inequality muſt generally be ſuch as is obſerved by nature: That is, in due proportion to ſome common uſe, or neceſſary to ſome particular exigence.

CLEAND. Give me leave to urge again, that the more you ground your reply upon nature, the more you ſeem to derogate from the conſtraint of rules.

EUDOX. Pardon me, Sir. For nothing is more generally conſtant to rules, than nature. And beſides, you ſee I often ſay, that

[1] Entretiens *d'Ariſte* & *d'Eugene*.

nothing

DIAL. III. nothing can be truly eloquent which is not natural. For eloquence can't be without reaſon, and reaſon is grounded in nature. Now though nothing can be natural that is not eaſy and free (for nature hates conſtraint) yet it is not therefore to be ſuppos'd that nature is oppoſite to rule and art. On the contrary, neither has nature ever more noble productions than when ſeconded by art, nor are the greateſt natural wits ever more extravagant than when they neglect the limits of a reaſonable method. *Longinus* [k] expreſſes himſelf to this purpoſe in the following compariſon: "As ſhips are in "imminent danger when abandon'd to their "own lightneſs without ſufficient ballaſt; "ſo it is in the ſublimeſt Styles when aban-"don'd to the impetuoſity of a raſh or ig-"norant nature." The greateſt wits are naturally firy and fertile, and thence more apt to run into immoderate thoughts and expreſſions.

CRITOM. Well, Sir, granting that rules muſt be regarded, pray'e what particular rules will you preſcribe?

EUDOX. I am not ſo preſumptuous as to preſcribe any. All I mean is, that ſuch ſhou'd be obſerved as have been deliver'd by

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[k] De Sublimi, cap. 2.

men

men of unqueſtionable authority in the matter. DIAL. III.

CRITOM. What? muſt not a man let paſs a ſentence from his pen, till he has examin'd it according to *Ariſtotle*, *Cicero*, and *Quintilian*?

EUDOX. Why truly, under favour, that is my opinion, and I am perſuaded no one will arrive at any great perfection in the art of writing, who is not well verſed in thoſe, or other authors who have explicated their main principles in that matter. Nor is this ſo impoſſible as you ſeem to imagine. For as in point of the *Latin* conſtruction, *Lilly*'s rules muſt be obſerved, and are ſo, not by any reflex thought, but by an habitual knowledge of them in one that writes *Latin* with facility; ſo writing accurately according to the preſcriptions of thoſe great men, may be attain'd without your apprehended impoſſibility of reflecting upon ſo nice and numerous rules. The chief, and to which moſt of them may be reduced as to our preſent purpoſe, conſiſt in the right choice and uſe of *proper words* and *metaphors*, in the *harmony* and *cadence* of periods, and above all in the *exactneſs of truth and reaſon*, in every part and propoſition.

CLEAND. As for proper words, or ſuch as include no metaphor, I believe the moſt

DIAL. III. rigorous rules will be allow'd of, even by *Critomachus* himſelf. Unleſs perhaps as to the liberty of coining new words, or borrowing from foreign languages. For I know he admires ſome authors who give themſelves a great liberty in that kind.

EUDOX. Yet upon reflection, I believe he will aſſent to *Quintilian*[1], that "It is more "ſecure to take ſuch words as are in uſe, "and dangerous to venture at framing new "ones: becauſe, ſays *Quintilian*, if they "ſucceed, your praiſe will be little; and "if rejected, they will expoſe you to be "banter'd." It will be like making a ridiculous figure in a borrowed and ſingular dreſs.

CRITOM. Sure you forget what I hinted at before, that *Ariſtotle* often ſays it is a mighty grace to uſe ſuch expreſſions as have a *foreign* air.

EUDOX. Pardon me, Sir. I have read again, ſince our laſt conferences, ſeveral places of him, and the more I think of what he means by *foreign expreſſions*, and particularly (to mention no other) in the 3d Book, 2d Chapter of his Rhetorick, the

[1] *Uſitatis verbis tutius utimur, nova non ſine quodam periculo fingimus. Nam ſi recepta ſunt, modicam laudem afferunt, repudiata etiam jocos excitant.* Inſtit. lib. 1. cap. 5.

more

more I am convinced of the reſerve he requires in that kind. And I think what he generally means is compriſed in the ſaying of *Horace* [m]; which I ſhall not offer to tranſlate, ſince I have heard ſay Mr. *Dryden* own'd he cou'd not equal it. DIAL. III.

Dixeris egregiè notum ſi callida verbum
Reddiderit junctura novum.

'Tis not taking words from foreign languages, or metaphors from foreign ſubjects, that he means; but ſuch an uſe, combination and application of known words, as may cauſe the admiration and pleaſure of novelty.

CLEAND. Nay, even ſpeaking of Poetry [n], I met with a place where he ſays it is very hard to uſe foreign words within the bounds of ſufficient moderation and decency.

CRITOM. However, I muſt deſire you both to reflect, that our language does unqueſtionably give us a great advantage in the privilege it has by preſcription, of taking words from other languages. 'Tis as profitable to our authors, as our *Importations* from the *Indies* are to our merchants.

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[m] Art. Poët.

[n] *Cæterùm, magni negotii eſt in peregrinis minimè a decenti recedere, minimeque eis abuti.* Poët. cap. 21.

DIAL. III.

EUDOX. The comparison will run still farther. For as those *Companies* wou'd prove indeed beneficial to particulars, but highly prejudicial to the nation in general, if not confin'd to certain Laws; so the liberty of taking words and expressions from other languages, might upon many occasions be useful to particular writers, by the nature of the subject they manage, yet it wou'd certainly at length prove very prejudicial to the language in general. In the former case, the false appearance of wealth in the importation of *Silks*, *Spices*, &c. wou'd exhaust the treasure of the nation, by carrying out our ready money, and other inconveniences, largely discoursed of in several books of late years: so besides other inconveniences, the true stock and fund of our language wou'd be lost in a boundless liberty of using extern words and phrases.

CLEAND. I have often observed that too great a mixture of that kind, makes a confused *Jargon*, and is insupportable to every judicious reader. *Brown* in his preface to *Vulgar Errors* complain'd long since, we shou'd soon be forced to study *Latin*, that we might understand *English*; and now *French* expressions and words are so thrown in without any measure, that if you know not this, you will be much puzzled to read books that pretend to be in your mother-tongue.

CRITOM.

DIAL. III.

CRITOM. In ſome authors I cou'd wiſh a greater reſervedneſs in that kind. Nor can I but wonder at *Brown* for uſing ſo much, in that very place, the liberty he complains of.

EUDOX. What will you then ſay to theſe expreſſions I have mark'd from one ſingle *Reſolve* of *Feltham*[a]? Here he tells you that a good man is full of *gladding vivifications*; That drunkenneſs is the *floating of the ſtrenleſs ſenſes, and diſapparels the ſoul, and by it even thoughts ſuffer a denudation.* That *the moſt benighted cogitations tumble in this flood from the ſwelled tongue*; that *it beſtiates the braveſt ſpirits.*

CLEAND. Bleſs me! what ſtuff is this?

EUDOX. You have here moreover, *Epotations of dumb liquour, inebriations, a temulentive tongue, the brainſickneſs with giddy verminations*, &c.

CRITOM. This I muſt own is deteſtable. But we are now-a-days ſufficiently free from that ſort of Style.

EUDOX. I fear there is ſomething of it in theſe expreſſions of *Callicrates*: *Pleaſing*

[a] *Reſolve* 84.

DIAL. III. *retroſpections and comfortable preſages, being admirable opiates*; in his *diluted happineſs, galliardizing notes*, and his *paradiſiacal temper from a poſt-diluvian mortal.* In this ſame paper I have mark'd a few expreſſions out of *Machiavel Redivivus*, not unlike that ſort of language. To pleaſe the *Earl* he dedicates unto, he falls admiring his *refulgent qualities*, and then declares, that *the exuberous current of his inexhauſted virtues cannot be oppugned even by the ſtrength of malice.* Where, to ſay nothing of *exuberous*, methinks *to oppugn a current* is very odd *Engliſh.* The very firſt words of his Preface are, *how horrendous are the times.* Now this is meer *Tragi-comick*; for *horrendous* is ridiculous, in ſpite of its dreadful ſound. There follows immediately, that *ambition is dark, and cannot bear the luminous irradiations of another's peace.* Beſides that *irradiations of a man's peace* is ſtrange enough, ſuch words as *luminous* and *irradiations* are not, I think, to be uſed, unleſs in a philoſophical diſcourſe upon the nature of light. Moreover, though that ſame Author has juſt reaſon to complain of thoſe who make the moſt ſacred ordinations ſerve their impious deſigns; one cannot help ſmiling when he ſays[p], *they force 'em to obſtetricate to their deſigns.* Of this nature, in Mr. *Dodwell's*

[p] *Machiavel Redivivus*, pag. 8.

two

two letters of advice, you have; *to expiate impendent imprudence*; *preconſideration is better than poſtnate advice*; *proſtituting and deſecrating truth*; and other expreſſions almoſt as unaccountable, as his opinions in religion. I cou'd gather ſeveral more inſtances of this ſort, to prove we are not ſufficiently free from the affectation of ſuch terms, as are newly coin'd or forg'd. DIAL. III.

CLEAND. I ſuppoſe your opinion of old words, is much the ſame as of new ones; ſince in effect they become new by being brought again to uſe from neglect and oblivion.

CRITOM. However, unleſs they are too frequent and too far ſuperannuated, they have upon occaſions a particular grace, and according to *Ariſtotle*, make the diſcourſe more venerable[q].

EUDOX. And more ridiculous, unleſs they are uſed with great diſcretion. Give me leave to add this reaſon, which occurs to me now, why great care muſt be had in the uſe of what you call *ſuperannuated* words. The reaſon is, that unleſs you fall into the hands of as learned an Antiquary as our great *Selden*, your readers will be as

[q] *Sanctiorem & admirabiliorem faciunt orationem.* Rhet. lib. 3. cap. 2.

DIAL. III. displeas'd with you as if you designed to puzzle them, and to reflect upon their ignorance. Much of the like reason holds in foreign words.

CLEAND. By your way of mentioning the word *super-annuated*, and *ante-diluvian mortals* of *Callicrates*, I am minded to ask your opinion concerning compound words.

EUDOX. *Aristotle*[r] seems to appropriate them to *Dithyrambicks*, even in *Greek* which bears them much better than *Latin* or any of our neighbouring languages. In ours they are far from being noble and magnificent. Yet some we allow in verse, which do not pass in prose; and some, especially double compounds, I shou'd hardly think ever allowable. Which makes me doubt whether to *over-de-preciate* will be long approved, especially being compounded of destructive terms, and it is in reality, as if you should say, to *over-under-value*. Upon the whole, words must neither be too old nor too new. We should do as Dr. *Sprat* says *Cowley* did: That he had no manner of affectation in them, taking them as he found them made to his hand, *neither going before, nor coming after the use of the age*. The other reflections that

[r] *Utilissima est duplex elocutio Dithyrambicis: isti enim sunt pleni strepitus.* Rhet. lib. 3. cap. 2.

might

might be offer'd upon the choice of words, will be ſufficiently comprized in thoſe we ſhall make upon the cadence, metaphors, and proportions of expreſſions to their ſubject. DIAL. III.

CRITOM. As to the *cadence*, notwithſtanding what you ſaid lately, I cannot imagine to what niceties you wou'd reduce us. Sure at leaſt you wou'd not have the harmony of ſound, take place of ſenſe. Muſt reaſon yield, to let the period fall; or an argument loſe its force, to let the cadence be ſmooth?

EUDOX. By no means. But I would have it paſs for certain, that reaſon is never more perſuaſive than when harmonious. And we find that when the ſenſes ſtrike in with reaſon, even virtue and morality gain their cauſe; and when the ear and mind are pleas'd together, we are far more eaſily convinced, than when a part of us is ſtill diſſatisfied. Nor can I imagine it will be hard to conclude how great a deference muſt be had to the ear in the uſe of words, if we reflect, that the very ſame words differently placed, move and engage with a very different influence. And experience teaches us, that ſuch is the connection between ſenſe and reaſon in man, that harmony, tho' no part of the argument, is commonly a part of the perſuaſiveneſs: ſo willing we are to believe,

DIAL. III. lieve, that what pleaſes, is true. Nor is this to be underſtood only of reciting or ſpeaking, but alſo of writing. For the eye calls upon the ear, if I may uſe the expreſſion, in the way to the underſtanding; and the ſound of the words, tho' you read them in ſilence, gets as ſoon to the ear, as the ſenſe to the mind.

CRITOM. Is not at leaſt the harmony you ſpeak of, too arbitrary a thing to be reduced to rule? ſince what is harmony to one, is diſpleaſing to another.

EUDOX. Tho' in ſome reſpects it is arbitrary, yet ſomething there is, that pleaſes every one's ear. And tho' it is not ſo much to be learnt by art as by genius, yet reflecting upon thoſe Authors that are moſt univerſally liked, it may be learnt, at leaſt in great meaſure. Or, at leaſt, ſome faults will be as eaſily diſcerned as a crack'd untunable voice in a conſort of muſick. Such muſt be carefully avoided. As for example: the frequent concurrence of vowels, and their cutting upon one another; a harſh rumbling of conſonants; and frequent repeating the ſame words. For the ear is ſoon tired without the entertainment of different ſounds. Even the ſweeteſt numbers, like ſweetmeats, are moſt apt to ſurfeit.

CLEAND. To this effect I remember the advice of *Boileau*, in the tranſlation you lately ſhewed me [f]. DIAL. III.

Of writing well if you wou'd gain the praiſe,
Be ſure ſtill to variate your phraſe.
A conſtant, and a never vary'd ſtyle,
Tho' ne'er ſo ſweet and pleaſing for a while,
Yet ſoon grows tedious, and the reader ſwears
The luſtious Author's born to plague his ears.

I find by daily experience the like effect from the Styles in proſe, which are *homogeneal*, by their perpetual ending in a ſhort cut of an antitheſis, or ſomething like it. It is as bad as perpetually to make rhymes, clinches, or blank verſe. In poets, who will be ſuch in ſpite of nature, you ſoon grow accuſtomed to their hackney trivial rhymes, and wherever you meet *Name*, your ear is already full with *Fame*. Thus in ſome people's proſe, my ear rings with the following ſound, before my eye has reached the word, and I laugh if I meet the fall I expected, and wonder if I do not; and either way, think more of the ſound than of the meaning. Which, as you obſerved from *Ariſtotle*, is certainly a great fault; words being to lead the Author's meaning to our mind, not to remove our attention, and fix it on the ſound.

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[f] Art Poetique.

EUDOX.

DIAL. III.

EUDOX. Thoſe, and the like faults, are not hard to be obſerved and avoided, and therefore are unpardonable when frequent. As for other rules of cadence and quantity of the ſyllables, they have not that place in our language as in *Greek* and *Latin*. And therefore in poetry we are thrown into the wretched neceſſity of rhymes. So that I know no better method to get the right harmony and agreeableneſs of Style, than to do as *Milton* ſays he did in his blindneſs,

Feed upon thoughts which voluntarie move
Harmonious numbers[t].

And then to obſerve the vein of the beſt writers: ſuch as Sir *William Temple*, whoſe Style is eaſy and natural; Mr. *Dryden*, whoſe proſe is no leſs harmonious than his verſe; and ſuch others: and in fine, tranſlating ſome places of the moſt ſmooth and fluent Authors, either out of *Latin* or *French*. Thus may the ear be inſenſibly habituated to the true gracefulneſs of proper and never-cloying numbers.

CRITOM. I am far from having any thing againſt the authors or methods you propoſed. But as I am pleaſed with more ſorts of

[t] *Milton*, Lib. 3. ver. 37.

muſick

muſick than one, ſo I am with ſeveral ſorts of Style. Nor am I yet grown ſo nice as *Cleander*, to abominate thoſe ſhort cuts he lately cenſured; nor is my ear grown yet ſo expecting and ſharp, as to prevent my eye, and to hear the ſound in ſilence. Then as for vowels cutting upon one another, and your harſh rumbling of conſonants, I have not obſerved any thing remarkable of that kind in the conciſe Authors who fall moſt under your cenſure. Beſides, there is a kind of harmony in harſhneſs of numbers ſometimes, as there is a pleaſure of the eye in ſome objects of terror. Thus *Taſſo*[u], of an army drawn up in battle-array, ſays,

DIAL. III.

Bello in sì bella viſta anco è l'horrore;
E di mezo la tema eſce il diletto.
Ne men le trombe horribili, e canore,
Sono à gli orecchi lieto e fero oggetto.

Horror it ſelf pleas'd in ſo fine a ſight,
And from the midſt of fear there roſe delight.
And th' ears from drums and trumpets dreadful ſound,
A no leſs fierce, and pleaſing object found.

There are then places in which harſh numbers are grateful, and in which a ſofter turn

[u] *Gierusalemme*, Canto 20. Stan. 30.

might

DIAL. III. might pleaſe the ear, but would offend the judgment, and prove the Author more skill'd in ſound than ſenſe. For certainly a ſtudied falling of periods, and diſpoſing of words, where even reaſon ſhou'd ſeem in a manner diſcompoſed by the paſſion, muſt needs be as diſpleaſing to the underſtanding, as it might otherwiſe be pleaſing to the ear. *Might* otherwiſe, I ſay: For to ſpeak properly, nothing methinks can pleaſe the ear that diſpleaſes reaſon. The very ſound of the words, if contrary to the exigence of the ſubject, turns to a jarring diſcord.

EUDOX. While you make ſuch reflections as theſe, I ſhall hardly think you will continue much averſe from exacting a great nicety of rule to a reaſonable and proper way of writing. I ſhall conclude moreover, that your judgment prevails againſt the prejudice you have taken to whatever looks like criticiſm. And therefore I am perſuaded you will ſoon be a leſs admirer of ſome ways of writing which you have rather had a difficulty to cenſure or condemn, than a reflex deſign to approve. And at preſent, notwithſtanding your declaring againſt a nice ear, I fancy you will not deny but that, excepting ſuch occaſions as you have mention'd, wherein reaſon is diſorder'd by paſſion, there is a roughneſs of numbers which can't be excuſed. In verſes it is eaſily obſerved. Nor do I believe there is ſo dull,

or

or ſo indulgent an ear, as not to find fault with the numbers, how much ſoever he may be pleas'd with the ſenſe of this *Epigram*[w].

DIAL. III.

Ex tuo enim animo haud potes haud noviſſe meum illum,
Qui ſuum in hac tuâ agit dudum animâ ipſe animum.

Which may be thus turn'd in juſt as many words, and juſt the ſame harſhneſs of numbers:

My mind you can't but from your own heart tell,
Since 'tis ſo long that mine in your's does dwell.

In proſe too, ſomething of the like harſhneſs is eaſily perceived, and much to be avoided. For inſtance: when *Callicrates* ſays, *conceit with a mixture of gravity is an admirable waſh to make one look as wiſe as one would wiſh*: I cannot think but you find that *waſh, wiſh, as, wiſe, would*, ſo near together, make a horrid ſound. Such words are not ſociable, and ought to be kept at a greater diſtance.

CRITOM. Such faults however are rare in him, and others who write in the Style you moſt decry.

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[w] In diſſert. prævia ad delectum Epigrammatum.

EUDOX.

DIAL. III.

EUDOX. I can't ſay I have obſerved them frequent. The nature of their Style turns 'em into another jog; and were it not for the oddneſſes of their abrupt, and yet expected and foreſeen cadences, I ſhou'd have little to ſay to them upon this account. And upon this whole ſubject, I will only add, that the thought, if well and properly digeſted, will generally of it ſelf give the right order of the words; and that the natural diviſion, and care of ranging the notions, will make the harmony, as it does the wit and ſenſe of the diſcourſe. Other times, eſpecially in longer periods, the ear muſt be conſulted upon the ſyllables and words; it muſt be admitted into the examination of their force, their ſound, their quantity, their agreement, and their proper place.

CLEAND. Upon the reflections you have given me occaſion to make, it muſt then be in the harmony of *Engliſh* proſe as it is with our rhymes in verſe. Whence it will follow that a great rule of attaining the perfection in it, is to be ſevere and exact in the beginning. And therefore what *Boileau*[x] counſels upon rhymes, may be applied to a Style in proſe.

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[x] Art. Poët. Canto 1.

What-

Whate'er's your ſubject, pleaſant or ſublime,
Make an agreement 'twixt your ſenſe and rhyme;
And never let them go a different way:
Rhyme's but a ſlave, and muſt be taught t'obey.
If from the firſt beginnings you provide,
To make them cloſely ſtick to reaſon's ſide,
You'll find at length they need not far be ſought,
They'll of themſelves come rolling to your thought.
Rhymes kept at firſt ſeverely under awe,
Do eaſily ſubmit to every law
Of ſenſe: but when by negligence ſet free,
They ſoon rebel, and then will ever be
At odds with reaſon for the upper hand;
And the beſt thoughts begun by the command
Of reaſon, then alas! will oftentimes
End in a folly to obey the rhymes.

EUDOX. Moſt certainly that happens much too often; and I queſtion not but an over-great concern for the cadence in proſe, may have as bad an effect. It is what has been already ſufficiently agreed upon. Reaſon muſt begin and end. Which however, if rightly taken, will not hinder the truth of what *Ariſtotle* ſays, that altho' the interpunctions ſhou'd be wanting, yet the very numbers, and harmony, and cadence, ſhould ſhew the end of the periods, and

DIAL. III. their ſeparate parts[y]. To come now to *Metaphors* (comprizing under the ſame, *Images*, as they call them, and the like) they are certainly grown exceſſively frequent, and unpardonable in ſeveral of thoſe I call *new-ſtyle* Authors. And I fear we ſhall ſoon be, or already are reduced to the circumſtances which made *Quintilian* ſay, that all the grace of *Metaphors* was loſt, or worn away, by the too frequent uſe and liberty of them[z].

CRITOM. Before you fall ſo much out with metaphors, be pleaſed, Sir, to remember that *Ariſtotle* ſays they are the chief ornaments of Style. Becauſe, ſays he, (and whatever may be my opinion of his phyſick, I muſt own he is admirable in his reaſoning upon theſe things) we have naturally a great deſire of knowledge. Conſequently thoſe words give the greateſt pleaſure which bring the moſt knowledge the ſhorteſt way[a]. Now *Metaphors*, beſides the ſubject to which they are applied, expreſs at the ſame time another different one, and bring to the mind ſeveral objects under one view.

EUDOX. That very reaſon ſhews they ſhould not be too frequent. For then

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[y] *Oportet manifeſtum eſſe finem, non per librarium, neque per paragraphen, ſed per numeros.*

[z] *Jam in his amiſimus modum, & gratiam rei nimiâ captatione conſumpſimus.* Quint. lib. 8. cap. 6. poſt medium.

[a] *Faciliter diſcere omnibus a naturâ jucundum eſt: quare quacunque ex verbis velocem nobis ingerunt diſciplinam, hæc ſuaviſſima ſunt.* Ariſt. Rhet.

they

they rather clog than adorn the diſcourſe, and are more apt to confound than inform the mind. A perpetual rolling of Metaphors I take alſo to be ſomething like changing of ſcenes upon ſtages. They are to be changed ſometimes for the pleaſure of the eye, and to help the plot. But if every moment you ſhift from palaces to woods, from woods to temples, from them to tents, from tents to ſeas, and ſo round again; I am more diſpleaſed with your forcing me to ſuch ſudden turns in my imagination, and with your ſhuffling and unavoidable bungling, than I am pleaſed with the variety. Thus metaphorical expreſſions give both grace and ſtrength to the thoughts, when judiciouſly uſed. But if continually heap'd upon a ſubject, they obſcure it, hinder requiſite attention to the main point, and the reader is more diſpleaſed with the confuſion and jumbling, than pleaſed with the multiplicity of your notions, and his own.

CLEAND. *Cicero* (I remember the compariſon from the ſchools) compares them to clothes, which, firſt invented for neceſſity, ſerved afterwards for ornament[b]. They ſupply the want of proper

[b] *Ut veſtis frigoris depellendi cauſâ reperta primò, poſt adhiberi cœpta eſt etiam ad ornatum corporis & dignitatem; ſic verbi tranſlatio inſtituta eſt inopiæ cauſâ, frequentata delectationis.* Cic. de Orat. lib 3. poſt. medium.

DIAL. III. words, and grace the diſcourſe when rightly uſed. But, upon what you was ſaying, I may add, that as clothes from a cover againſt cold and ſhame, become an incumbrance by ſeveral modiſh inconveniences, and degenerate into vanity and luxury; ſo Metaphors, from neceſſity and ornament, become a luxuriant and uneaſy extravagance, and hinder the free, natural, and clear conveyance of thought. I wiſh too, that as the vanity of dreſſing puts ſeveral upon expences too great for their condition, ſo the vanity of metaphorizing did not put ſeveral upon a greater ſtretch of thoughts than their wit will bear.

EUDOX. In effect, 'tis common to find that peoples vanity is larger than their purſe. And as the mode now goes, few are ſo judicious, as to meaſure their appearance by their ſtock. Nor is it leſs eaſy to obſerve that the way of writing draws ſeveral into the like exceſs. In one caſe, too much is laid out upon clothes, to leave a ſufficient remainder for the comfortable entertainment of life, and much leſs for the ſupport of a laſting fortune; and in the other, too much is ſpent upon the finery of thoſe gaudy expreſſions, to leave a ſufficient ſupply for the carrying on ſuch a ſolid diſcourſe as may pleaſe a judicious reader, and give a laſting reputation to the author.

CLEAND.

CLEAND. Even before I found upon tryal that ſuch authors pleaſe leſs, the more they are read, I always was ſomething diſſatisfied with too frequen Metaphors; and now upon our diſcourſing theſe matters, and having read ſome places of *Ariſtotle*, *Cicero*, and *Quintilian*, I am far more apt to diſapprove them. Among other obſervations, I find they are far from giving that force and energy to the diſcourſe which is imagined. The variety of Ideas they ſuggeſt, is not only apt to make a confuſion, and tire, as it were, the mind before it can break thro' the croud of them, and reach the author's thought; but alſo, either weakens the reaſon by a falſe application, or at leaſt, upon an exact review, it will be found, the ſtrength is leſs than it appear'd. Eſpecially in *metaphorical Epithets*, which only add number, not force. Whereupon *Quintilian* compares ſuch diſcourſes to armies, wherein if the *Vivandiers* and boys are multiplied too much, they only hinder marches and expedition; and tho' they double the number, are far from doubling the ſtrength [c].

[c] *Ne oneretur tamen multis. Nam ſit longa & impedita (oratio) ut eam judices ſimilem agmini totidem lixas habenti quot milites: in quo & numerus eſt duplex, nec duplum virium.* Quint. Inſtit. lib. 8. cap. 6. circa medium.

DIAL. III.

EUDOX. I wiſh we cou'd prevail with *Critomachus* to read thoſe Authors upon the matters we have been diſcourſing of. I am perſuaded he wou'd ſoon own, that, without falling into *the Iniquity of Criticizing*, one may find fault with ſeveral writers in theſe points, and particularly in this.

CRITOM. I ſhall certainly follow your advice in reading them with attention. I have hitherto had no farther acquaintance with them than what I brought from ſchools: excepting ſomething of *Ariſtotle*, whom I read now and then, to find ſomething that may help me in diſcourſing againſt the *Peripateticks*, from their own maſter. And to let you ſee that as to the preſent matter, I am not ſo far from being reclaimed, nor ſo averſe from exactneſs, if it degenerates not into the ill-natured weakneſs of criticiſm; I own plainly, that in thoſe very Authors I have liked ſo much, their metaphors have ſometimes diſguſted me; not only becauſe too frequent, but alſo becauſe either mean, or too great, or very diſparate, or not conſequently managed.

EUDOX. Thoſe are in effect the greateſt faults in this matter. Of the three former ſorts (ſays *Quintilian*[d]) any one that knows they

[d] *Quorum exempla nimium frequenter deprehendet qui ſcierit hæc vitia eſſe.* Quint. l. 8. Inſt. cap. 6.

they are vicious, will eaſily obſerve too frequent examples. The latter, (if I take your meaning right) is joining different metaphors in the ſame period, or making a pretended ſequel of diſcourſe with one kind of them in the beginning, and ending with another. Beginning for example with a *Tempeſt*, and ending with a *Conflagration*. Which *Quintilian*, in the ſame place, ſays, is moſt diligently to be avoided, as being a mighty deformity by the inconſequent combination of objects [e].

DIAL. III.

CRITOM. What you ſay, is ſo exactly my meaning, that I had a kind of reflection upon that very place of *Quintilian*, which I had taken notice of not long ago, when I caſually found it cited in the *Doubts upon the* French *Tongue*. And as far as I can gueſs by ſome examples of that book, and the reflections he makes upon them, I ſhou'd, by reading it over, eaſily become much more nice in my judgment of Styles, than I imagined.

EUDOX. It wou'd certainly make you examine them, and conſequently diſapprove them. To purſue the point we were upon, I fear theſe lines in *Callicrates* are an ex-

[e] *In primis eſt cuſtodiendum ut qua ex genere cœperis tranſlationis hoc deſinas. Multi enim cum initium a tempeſtate ſumpſerunt, incendio aut ruinâ finiunt: quæ eſt inconſequentia rerum fœdiſſima*, Lib. 8. Cap. 6. poſt medium.

DIAL. III. ample of a vicious combination of metaphors. "The greater part of men, ſays "he, enter only like mutes to fill the ſtage. "Sure they think themſelves born only to "ſhew their inſignificancy. Why elſe do "they make the voyage of life to ſo little "purpoſe, and ſpend their taper in ſmoak "and ſmother?" Here you have the *ſtage*, the *voyage*, the *taper* of life, and this conſuming in *ſmoak* and *ſmother*. Strange Ideas to preſs the ſame thought in a breath! Such inconſiſtent or various expreſſions are very common with thoſe Authors, who are too eaſy in following the heat of imagination, and cannot fix it ſufficiently for the finiſhing out the true ſequel of notions.

CLEAND. As a fault of this nature is very diſpleaſing to an obſerving eye, ſo on the contrary, a metaphorical repreſentation carried on ſmoothly, and compleatly managed, has a ſingular grace. I remember you ſhew'd me one not long ago on a very different ſubject of diſcourſe from the preſent. It was in Mr. *Dryden*'s dedication of the *Hiſtory of the League*. If you pleaſe I will ſhew it to *Critomachus*. Here's the place. Speaking of the troubles of our nation in thoſe times, "I look not, ſays "he, on the ſtorm as overblown. 'Tis "ſtill a guſty kind of weather; there is "a kind of ſickneſs in the air; it ſeems "indeed to be clear'd for ſome few hours; "but

" but the wind is ſtill blowing from the ſame corner; and when new matter is " gather'd into a body, it will not fail to " bring round, and pour upon us a ſecond " tempeſt. I ſhall be glad to be found a " falſe prophet; but he was certainly in- " ſpired, who, when he ſaw a little cloud " ariſing from the ſea, and that no bigger " than a hand, gave immediate notice to " the king, that he might mount the " chariot before he was overtaken by the " ſtorm." DIAL. III.

CRITOM. A metaphor thus carried on, with ſo little mixture of any diſparate or odd Ideas, is either no conſtraint to the mind, or keeps it upon ſo eaſy a bent, that the attention is led on as pleaſingly and naturally as can be wiſh'd.

EUDOX. Beſides carrying on the point without entring any improper or jarring notions, there is no leſs skill in carrying it on no farther than it ought. *La Bruyere*[f] ſays it is the proper part of a coxcomb to be tireſome, where the man of ſenſe ſhall never fail to leave you before you begin to wiſh he was gone. Thus a diſcreet Author ſhall leave off a Metaphor before you begin to think it too long, while another ſhall run it on into the tireſome lengths of

[f] Caracteres ou Mœurs de ce ſiecle.

childiſh-

DIAL. III. childiſhneſs and affectation. I have here an example of *Feltham*, which will declare my meaning intelligibly enough, unleſs I am much miſtaken [g]. "Every man, "ſays this Author, is a vaſt and ſpacious "ſea; his paſſions are the winds that ſwell "him in diſturbant waves: How he tum-"bles, and roars and foams, when they "in their fury trouble him! Sometimes "the weſt of pleaſure fanning in luxuriant "gales; ſometimes the madid ſouth ſor-"rowful and full of tears; ſometimes the "ſharp eaſt piercing with a teſty ſpleen; "ſometimes the violent and bluſtering "north, ſwelling the cheek with the anger's "boiling blood. Any of theſe in ex-"tremes, make it become innavigable, "and full of danger to the veſſel that ſhall "coaſt upon it. When theſe are too loud, "it is perillous; but when again they are "all laid in the ſtillneſs of an immotive "calm, 'tis uſeleſs. And tho' it be not "ſo ready to hurt, yet it is far from a-"vailing to the profit of a voyage; and "the paſſengers may ſooner famiſh by being "becalmed, than coaſt it over for the ad-"vantage of their mart."

THIS example, compared with that of Mr. *Dryden*, will ſufficiently ſhew the difference between a metaphorical repreſenta-

[g] *Feltham*, Reſolve 62.

tion, carried ſmoothly and naturally on to a juſt extent, and one that runs into a tedious kind of childiſhneſs. DIAL. III.

CRITOM. To give you farther hopes of my converſion, or rather to give ſtill more grounds for the opinion you are pleas'd to have of me, that I am only againſt carrying rules and niceties too far; I own that kind of writing is inſupportable. And I will add, that as I am diſpleas'd with a poetical ſort of childiſhneſs, ſo I cannot endure the pedantick humour of drawing metaphors from ſciences and ſubjects which are commonly unknown. No, I can't endure, for example, that to underſtand a *Treatiſe of Government*, I muſt firſt have learnt a good deal of *Catoptrics*, or that I muſt be acquainted with *Paraquaria*, to profit by a diſcourſe upon prayer.

EUDOX. Thus lately, upon a very improper occaſion, I heard, in a diſcourſe from the pulpit, ſeveral expreſſions framed upon a *Diateſſaron* and *Diapente*. I knew indeed the words were *Greek*, and related to Muſick. But the more I love Muſick, the leſs I liked the ſilent reproach of my ignorance in the very object of my inclination. In fine, I wonder the difficulty there is in rightly managing the metaphorical Style, does not make people more cautious how they venture upon it. *Ariſtotle* having ſaid,

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ſaid, it is hard to make a right uſe of compound and of foreign terms, and the other things he mentions in that place of his poetry; adds, that the hardeſt of all is the right uſe of Metaphors, or metaphorical *Similes*, and which alone cannot be taken from others, but muſt be had from natural judgment and wit, and is a great ſign of an excellent genius [h]: which if ſeconded by obſervations from the practice and moderation of the choiceſt Authors, will be much improved.

CRITOM. I wou'd willingly ask, whether the indirect uſe of them is not commonly more elegant, than to ſay directly, this is like that. Or, in other terms, whether it is better to uſe the Metaphor, or the metaphorical compariſon.

EUDOX. The indirect uſe is methinks commonly the more elegant and graceful. Thus, for example, it ſeems leſs elegant to ſay, that oppoſing hard texts of ſcripture againſt one another, is like ſtriking one ſtone againſt another; than to give the indirect compariſon in the words of [i] *Osborn*

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[h] *Multum autem eſt ſingulis de quibus diximus, recte uti poſſe, tum compoſitis vocibus tum peregrinis. Maximum autem omnium eſt rectè uti metaphoris poſſe. Solum enim illud neque ab alio deſumi poteſt, & eſt præclara indicium indolis.* Ariſt. de Poët. Cap. 22.

[i] Advice to a Son. *Sect.* 5. §. 7.

in

in this place I have here before me, where he adviſes *referring diſputes to clear texts, without knocking one hard place againſt another, till an unquenchable fire of contention is kindled, and jarring and uncertain ſounds of religion are heard.* However, often the direct application is proper, and perhaps may be very often requiſite to make the *Simile* more clear and natural. And I can't but like the other example I have mark'd here from the ſame Author[k]: *Some melancholy conſtitutions, like glaſſes, retain in their fancies, as meerly relating to themſelves, the reflections of all things that paſs in their preſence.* But by giving theſe inſtances from this Author, I wou'd by no means be accountable for any of his looſe, immoral, irreligious principles, and *Innuendo's*; nor for the many faults of his Style, and particularly in the abuſe of *Metaphors* and *Similes*: as in this vile one, that *covetouſneſs, like a candle ill made, ſmothers the ſplendor of an happy fortune, in its own greaſe*[l]: Or the odd one, where he calls cenſure a *Purgatory*, and in the ſame line a *Wind*; in theſe terms: *The way lies to the paradiſe of peace, through the purgatory of cenſure, which all muſt expect to find their ſails fill'd with*, &c. Take now this expreſſion as you pleaſe, it

[k] Advice to a Son. *Part* 2. §. 2.
[l] Advice to a Son. *Sec.* 1. §. 35.

will

DIAL. III. will be very odd to hear of *ſails fill'd with the purgatory of cenſure.* And let thus much ſuffice, for the preſent, upon Metaphors.

CLEAND. Give me leave, before we paſs from this point, to add a remark I made yeſterday morning, upon a paſſage of *Callicrates.* To prove the advantage of general kindneſs, he preſſes ſeveral inſtances of mutual dependance, which makes it neceſſary in human ſociety. *You know,* ſays he, *the trade of life can't be carry'd on without partners. There is a reciprocal dependance between the greateſt and the leaſt. And the beſt figure is but a cypher if it ſtands alone.* Here you have the *trade of life,* as we had above the *ſtage, voyage,* and *taper* of it. Then we are to underſtand, that one can't be the greateſt, if there is no one leſs; and this indeed I believe all his readers will conceive. But then a *cypher* being the beſt of figures, can only be true as it is a circle, ſince by itſelf it is no number. Now though *Arithmetick* is part of the *Mathematicks,* yet many a one that knows arithmetick beyond the *Golden Rule,* or that of *Fellowſhip,* knows nothing of a circle being the beſt of figures.

EUDOX. Perhaps it may be too minute to inſiſt upon ſuch remarks as that. However it puts me in mind of what *Quintilian* ſays,

ſays, that continual metaphorizing, among many other inconveniences, is apt to make ſentences be *Riddles* [m]. But to paſs now to the chief point in the art of writing accurately, and which will comprehend the farther reflections which might be expected upon the metaphorical Style; to come, I ſay, to that *exactneſs of proportion and truth* which is requiſite in every thought and expreſſion, I muſt beg *Critomachus*'s leave to be plain in giving my opinion, which will ſeem, I fear, a little rigid. DIAL. III.

CRITOM. To ſhew you how freely you may be ſevere in requiring the exactneſs which the great maſters of eloquence demand, I will own to you, that methinks I am going to turn *Rigouriſt* myſelf in theſe matters. Upon this acknowledgment, if I ſhou'd propoſe now the breaking off our preſent conference, you wou'd perhaps think I am like one that has an uneaſineſs of conſcience riſing ſtrongly upon him. He is unwilling to break off a long habit, and conquer entirely a long prejudice from education, and is therefore glad of any pretence to delay his thorough converſion and profeſſion of faith. But in reality, if I mind you, it is paſt ſeven by my watch, and therefore my time to go; it is only

[m] *Continuus ejus uſus in Allegoriam & Ænigmata exit.* Lib. 8. Cap. 6. poſt initium.

DIAL. III. to ſtand to my word. Two days hence we will purſue the point, if you pleaſe.

EUDOX. I will expect you about the ſame time as uſually, in the afternoon. Adieu. If you pleaſe, *Cleander*, we will make a viſit to your nephew.

CLEAND. Agreed. He will be ſurprized to hear the news of *Critomachus*'s preſent diſpoſition, *&c.*

THE

THE FOURTH DIALOGUE, BETWEEN CRITOMACHUS, EUDOXUS, *and* CLEANDER.

CRITOM. IT was not eaſy for me to get away from the company I was engaged in to-day at dinner. But my word was given. And beſides, my inclination drew me. For I am truly like thoſe I mention'd, who, being upon a converſion, though the final reſolution is hard to be taken, yet when the firſt difficulties are broken, like no converſation ſo well, as where they can diſcourſe their remaining doubts. Be pleas'd then, *Eudoxus*, to purſue the point you propoſed.

EUDOX. To be plain then, I think ſeveral are very defective in matter of truth and proportion of their thoughts and expreſſions. *Callicrates*, complaining of the vanity of men, ſays, *we love to diſtinguiſh ourſelves*

DIAL. IV. *by exceſſes, and be great in diſproportions; as if it was more creditable to be a monſter than a man.* This gives an expreſſive character of thoſe, who wanting the ſupport of his genius, will however be writing in ſurprizing, disjointed Phraſes, and chiefly ſeeking what I think he calls *tumour of expreſſion*, make every where a ſtrange diſproportion. Their every ſentence ſtands up for itſelf, reſolved as it were to be the higheſt and largeſt of the pack. Hence they run beyond all bounds and meaſure of diſcretion and truth.

CLEAND. *Boileau* ſpeaks of thoſe who will be great in that miſtaken grandeur and diſproportion, in the following terms[a]:

Some firy Authors mad beyond defence,
Still ſeek for wit beyond all common ſenſe;
And hold it mean to think as others do,
Or talk like fellow-mortals here below.
They think in writing there no wit can be,
No noble turn without Hyperbole.
Love, war, or pleaſure, or whate'er they treat,
A haughty fancy and unruly heat
Still makes th' expreſſion and the thought too great.
Thus by exceſs they fall immenſely ſhort
Of common ſenſe, and only ſerve for ſport,

[a] Art of Poëtry, Canto 1.

While

While ev'ry ſober man ſpectator ſits, DIAL.
Smiling to ſee theſe falſe Italian *wits* IV.
Cheriſh their folly, and be fondly glad
To find themſelves ſuperlatively *mad.*

CRITOM. *To fall ſhort by exceſs,* under favour, Sir, ſeems an odd expreſſion. But let that paſs, leſt you ſhould take me for a Critick. As to the preſent point, there is certainly a kind of writing frequent with the *Italians*, that wou'd be inſupportable in *Engliſh*. Yet I will be bold to ſay we are not to be bound up to all the rules of the *French* Criticks. If our language bears leſs elevation than the *Italian*, it bears more than the *French*. And therefore I do not think our authors are to be condemn'd upon the verdict of *Boileau* or *Bouhours*. As in other matters, 'tis often eaſy to obſerve that thoſe very things which paſs for national perfections, take their origine from oppoſite defects, (as in *Holland* they are forced to be neat, not to be overrun with vermine) ſo it is with the nature and genius of ſeveral particular languages, and the methods of writing in different nations. A *Frenchman*, who pretends to exactneſs of judgment, ſhall be always inſiſting upon the excellences of a ſweet, eaſy, natural Style. Any thought that has the leaſt air of an exaggeration, ſhall not eſcape his cenſure. And why? but that being naturally light, they eaſily run into extravagances unleſs kept ſeverely within bounds. This,

DIAL. IV. and the character of their language, makes them almoſt uncapable of ſucceſs in venturing at ſublime expreſſions. Conſcious of theſe defects, they turn their endeavours to a ſmoother eloquence, which is rather agreeable than great.

CLEAND. I will not deny but the *French* eloquence is a greater argument that their fancy is too ſtrong, and their language too weak, than that their judgments are naturally more exact than their neighbours. Reflecting upon *Balzac* will make this opinion more probable. No *French* author perhaps had a greater inclination, or uſed more endeavours to maintain the dignity of a ſublime ſtrength of Style, yet certainly he often goes into monſtrous imaginations, and to appear great, runs into vaſt diſproportion of thought and expreſſion. And here I can't but obſerve, that one may much queſtion a very common opinion, which makes *Voiture* the greater wit of the two. I ſhou'd rather believe *Balzac* was inferior to him in judgment more than in wit, and that he did not ſo well underſtand the ſtrength and compaſs both of the language and genius of his nation; laying more ſtreſs and weight upon both, if I may uſe that expreſſion, than they would bear. In a word, *Balzac* is generally exorbitant and ſcarce ever great, or ſublime; whereas *Voiture*, more perfectly acquainted with the genius of

of the *French* language and wit, is commonly natural, and as it were, genteel, though ſeldom ſublime. Hence I believe he is admired for knowing he cou'd not be great without danger of exceſs, and the other is condemn'd while he miſtakes extravagances and *gaſconades* for ſublime wit and expreſſion. DIAL. IV.

EUDOX. I was always of that opinion. And ſpeaking more univerſally, I ſeldom read *Balzac* or other high-flown authors, but I call to mind a very little gentleman, who by a ſtrutting walk, and high-heel'd ſhoes, thought himſelf a proper man. He would have been leſs pointed at, and had walked the ſtreets with leſs danger of falling, had he been content with his natural inches. Thus the natural expreſſions of an author, to whom nature has given no great height of genius, wou'd make him paſs in the publick with leſs cenſure, than thoſe ſo high, but ſo affected and dangerous. I forget who it is, but ſomebody compares that way of writing, to walking upon ſtilts. And I wonder it is not more reflected upon in *England*, that Mr. *Bayes* has made it very uncreditable to put up for an author that will *elevate, and ſurprize, and all that.*

CRITOM. It muſt be reflected on alſo, that becauſe a club of bantering wits, have

DIAL. IV. been applauded in their burleſquing humourous way of criticizing a very eminent genius, it does not follow that all our authors muſt be poſſeſs'd with a *panick* fear of every elevated expreſſion. A noble vigour and boldneſs of words is often requiſite to give ſtrength and grace to the thought. At other times the thoughts themſelves abſolutely require more bold than regular expreſſions. Some Subjects too, in this, no leſs than was ſaid of harmony and ſmoothneſs of Style, muſt be in a ſtronger light. In ſuch occaſions (for that is always moſt eloquent which is moſt proper to the circumſtances) a fierceneſs of words, will pleaſe the moſt. And as in drawing up an army, the regularity of figure muſt be neglected to take the advantage of a riſing ground, ſo the exact proportion of ordinary rules, muſt be neglected to raiſe the periods above the common level.

CLEAND. Your compariſon puts me in mind of him who placed a conſiderable part of his troops upon ſo high and diſtant a poſt, that they cou'd not come time enough to ſuccour him in the plain. I fear the like often happens in thoſe Styles. Eminent expreſſions are often too far remov'd from the body of the diſcourſe; and ſerve only for a diſtant ſight, not for a real ſupport.

EUDOX. Another mighty inconvenience of affecting thoſe elevations, is the obſcurity which is apt to attend thoſe airy flights. For ſuch authors generally, as *Boileau* ſays [b],

Do by their boldly venturing too high,
Loſe both themſelves and reader in the ſky.

And when I find my author is hardly return'd within ken, but by a ſudden new flight he is preſently inviſible again, I cry out with the ſame Poet [c],

I hate an author that obſcurely writes,
And carries out of reach his airy flights.

CRITOM. An allowance however muſt be given for ſome certain ſubjects which require a greater freedom, or of their own nature can't admit that clearneſs and perſpicuity which muſt be in other occaſions, wherein *Ariſtotle* [d] has reaſon to place perſpicuity as the firſt and moſt neceſſary point of writing well. Yet *metaphyſical* notions, exceſs of paſſion, as of rage or deſpair, perplexities of mind, ſpeculative and contemplative reflections, and the like, can hardly ever be totally free from ſomething of obſcurity and confuſion.

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[b] Art Poëtique, Canto 1.
[c] *Boileau*, ibid.
[d] *Definita ſit orationis virtus, ut perſpicua ſit*, &c. Rhet. lib. 3. cap. 2.

DIAL. IV.

EUDOX. Then let ſuch things be confin'd to ſcholaſtick diſſertations, and ſuch books as no one cares for but thoſe who love to have their underſtandings non-plus'd, and are moſt ſatisfied when they ſee the leaſt of the writer's meaning. For ſome ſuch there are. And I am very well aſſured that one commending extreamly a preacher he admired, gave this inſtance of his great talent [e], *He reads* Spaniſh *Authors, and has ſuch high conceits, that I my ſelf can't underſtand him.* As for the thing it ſelf, tho' ſome ſubjects are of themſelves ſublime, and therein a reader may miſtake the obſcurity of the thing for that of expreſſion; yet commonly it is more from the author's genius, than from the nature of his ſubject, that he is dark and confuſed, and partly from want of judgment in aiming at higher and ſublimer matters than he is able to manage, and ſcrewing his expreſſions to ſupply the want of conception. Such writers ſhould take the advice of *Boileau* [f];

Learn then to think e'er you begin to write,
If you would do't with profit and delight.
When in the mind the thoughts digeſted lie,
Th' expreſſion then will eaſily comply.

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[e] *Legit Authores Hiſpanicos, & habet altiſſimos conceptus, quos ipſi non poſſumus intelligere.* Ita N. N.

[f] Art. Poëtique, Canto 1.

For

For all obſcurity comes from the mind, DIAL.
And we are ſeldom at a loſs to find IV.
Terms which may pleaſe both intellect and ear,
When to ourſelves we've fram'd our notions clear.

To which muſt be added however, that there is a certain character of wit which is in a manner naturally obſcure and unintelligible, as the ſame Author obſerves.

Some certain wits are nat'rally obſcure,
And in their darkneſs every way ſecure,
In ſpite of reaſon ſullenly ſtand good
'Gainſt all attempts of being underſtood.

CLEAND. To this purpoſe of a clear intelligible expreſſion naturally flowing from a right conception, you have doubtleſs ſeen it obſerved that the *French*, for an underſtanding perſon ſay, *une perſonne entendüe*, *a perſon underſtood*; as if it were the ſame thing to be eaſily underſtood, and to have a right underſtanding.

CRITOM. Well, Gentlemen, but will you not grant at leaſt there is ſometimes a kind of obſcurity not unlike, in its effects, to ſhades in a picture, which ſerve to diſtinguiſh the piece, and give greater luſtre to the other colours?

EUDOX,

DIAL. IV.

EUDOX. It is a pity to ruin ſo pleaſing a compariſon. Yet, under favour, Sir, I do not well conceive how an obſcure ſentence can add any luſtre to the following. For how can I underſtand the ſecond period better, becauſe I knew not what to make of the firſt?

CRITOM. My meaning is not of periods impenetrably obſcure; but rather of ſuch as expreſs ſufficiently all that ſhou'd be ſaid, and yet include more than they clearly expreſs. The great commendation *Pliny* gives of a Painter, I take for the character of a good writer; that in all his works more was always underſtood than painted [h]. Thus in writings, room muſt be left for the reader's wit and ſharpneſs in ſeeing beyond the ſurface of the words. For as I have read ſomewhere, we are then doubly pleaſed with an Author, who while thus we ſee his wit, makes us reflect upon our own; and gives us occaſion to flatter ourſelves, that we penetrate farther than every vulgar reader, who, as we imagine, will never take the hint and carry it to the thoughts we have upon it.

EUDOX. Unleſs I miſtake the place and meaning of *Pliny*, he adds [i], that altho'

[h] *In omnibus ejus operibus, plus ſemper intelligitur quam pingitur.* Plin.

[i] *Et cum ars ſumma ſit, ingenium tamen ſupra artem eſt.* Ibid.

the

the art of that great painter was ſingular, yet his genius, and the humouring his pieces, was above his art. Take this into the former part, and I will grant it to be the true character of a good writer. But then I muſt beg leave to think, this will never be found in thoſe, whoſe phraſes ſeem perpetually to be of a ſtudied and exceſſive greatneſs. And when *Pliny* or others ſay, it is artful to write ſo as to ſignify more than is fully expreſs'd, their meaning is not, that the reader muſt be put to the trouble of a long conjecture to find what the author wou'd be at. On the contrary, they always demand a clear, and perſpicuous elocution; tho' ſometimes a nice touch is better than a large explication. In a word; *Oracles* and *Prophecies* have preſcription for obſcurity, but few will be long of a humour to conſult authors who ſeem pretenders to the like privilege by writing in the Style of *Riddles*. It is not ſhort ſentences will make them ſupportable. DIAL. IV.

CLEAND. Perhaps they hope their ſhort ſentences will be taken by the rule of him that ſays[k],

" *For brevity is always good,*
" *Whether it be, or be not underſtood.*

[k] Hudibras.

Tho'

DIAL. IV. Tho' to ſpeak more ſeriouſly; however ſhort their ſentences may be, if they are obſcure, they are too long, and the Author is *loquacious*. For to talk without being intelligible, ſeems to be meer talking for talking ſake. Otherwiſe, if they had no mind to be underſtood, the ſhorter way had been to ſay nothing, according to that Epigram[1],

Quid juvat obſcuris involvere ſcripta latebris?
Ne pateant animi ſenſa tacere potes.

If you deſign'd not to be underſtood,
To ſay juſt nothing were at leaſt as good.

EUDOX. Where this obſcurity often occurs in treating of matters otherwiſe dangerous, it has this good at leaſt, that part of the harm is hidden. Tho' ſometimes indeed obſcure hints do more harm, by ſetting the imagination at work in a ſtronger way than if the expreſſion had been clear. And then ſuch writings are like the Cypreſs-tree, which *Pliny* ſays, has bitter leaves, no fruit, and a bad ſhade[m].

CRITOM. There is another ſort of obſcurity which I think you have in a manner overlook'd, and yet I own I have ſometimes

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[1] Sammarth. *in delectu Epigrammatum.*

[m] *Folio amara, fructu ſupervacua, baccis torva, & ne umbra quidem gratioſa.* Plin.

found

found it very diſagreeable. When for example the words are common and obvious, and there ſeems to be a meaning which diſappears when you come to a cloſer examen. May I not by your example compare them to a horrid Rock of which *Pliny* gives this ſtrange account; that if you only puſh'd it with your finger, you might move it; but it wou'd not be ſtirr'd if you tried to puſh it with your whole body[a]. If you touch ſlightly upon ſuch places, you may ſtir up ſomething of a meaning; if you preſs cloſe upon them, you will make nothing of them. And if I found myſelf diſſatisfied where ſuch places occurr'd but ſeldom, you may eaſily imagine I never cared for thoſe Authors where every thing almoſt is obſcure. I am ſo averſe from labour, that I ſhou'd not care for gold if it were to coſt me much digging. DIAL. IV.

CLEAND. Since *Eudoxus* gave me the applications of *Milton*, whereof I ſpoke to you, *Critomachus*, the next day, methinks I would expreſs the difficulty of paſſing through the obſcurity and confuſion of ſome Authors by what is ſaid in *Milton* by *Satan*, of the journey he made through the *Chaos*.

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[a] *Juxta* Arpaſa *oppidum* Aſiæ *cautes ſtat horrenda, uno digito mobilis, eadem ſi toto corpore impellatur reſiſtit.* Plin. Hiſt. lib. 2. cap. 46.

Long

DIAL. IV.

* *Long were to tell*
What I have done, what ſuffer'd, with what pain
Voyaged th' unreal, *vaſt, unbounded deep*
Of horrible confuſion I
Toil'd out my uncouth paſſage, forced to ride
Th' untractable Abyſs, plung'd in the womb
Of unoriginal night, and Chaos wilde,
That jealous of their ſecrets fiercely oppos'd
My journey ſtrange:

The miſery is, that after ſo ſad a journey through dark Authors, you oftentimes have not the luck of *Satan*, to meet with any thing better at the end of the *Chaos*. I have formerly been in the humour of reading ſuch books, but have ſince regretted the time and pains I have loſt. Which makes me now extremely averſe from any thing of obſcurity which coſt me heretofore ſo dear, with little or no advantage.

CRITOM. The humour of loving obſcure Authors is the ſad fate of many. One part of the reaſon, I hinted at before. I will add another from *Elizalde* a *Spaniſh Jeſuit*, and a very ſubtile one; and he deſigns in it, a fling both at *Ariſtotle* and his admirers. *I believe*, ſays he, *one reaſon that makes*

* *Milton*, Lib. 9. ver. 470.

him

him admired, is becauſe to underſtand any thing in him, is much the ſame as to invent, and we are apt to love and admire our own inventions [p].

DIAL. IV.

EUDOX. Some juſtify *Ariſtotle* even in that. The reaſon however why ſome are pleas'd with obſcure Authors, is ingenious. But to proceed in our preſent matter: Even abſtracting from the obſcurity which generally attends the pretended ſententious way of writing, ſo much admired by many, it is moreover very faulty in not giving the thoughts their due proportion and extent. *Manzini* [q] ſays (which you will wonder at from an *Italian*, and particularly from him) it is of all methods of writing the very worſt and moſt inſufferable. The compariſon he uſes upon this occaſion is very ſignificant, and formerly uſed by *Quintilian* [r]: When a field, or tree, bears too great a quantity of fruit, little or none comes to maturity becauſe they hinder one another. Nothing comes to its full greatneſs, for want of room to grow and ſpread. So ſentences, when ſet too thick, hinder the force and beauty of one another, and are either too

[p] Elizalde. *De formâ veræ Religionis inveniendâ.*

[q] *Preface to his Academical Diſcourſes.*

[r] *Denſitas earum obſtat invicem, ut in ſatis omnibus, fructibuſque arborum nihil ad juſtam magnitudinem adoleſcere poteſt, quod loco in quem creſcat caret.* Quint. lib. 8. cap. 5.

imper-

DIAL. IV. imperfectly expreſs'd to be intelligible, or if intelligible, not graceful at leaſt, becauſe throng'd, and crouded together.

CLEAND. I have found upon experience the truth of what you alſo ſignified to me before, and what *Quintilian* ſays, I think in the ſame place[f], that an over-great deſire of being ſententious, neceſſitates in a manner to fall into puerilities, and many weak, cold, inſignificant things; while number, not choice is their concern. They give their every period ſomething like the air and turn, but not the ſolidity of an *Apothegm*. Which method can't fail to grow tedious and fulſome, when the firſt ſurprize is a little over. For that conſtraint and ſcrewing up of the Style, *croſſes upon nature*, and breeds a great diſguſt of thoſe writings which were moſt admired, till reflection made it appear, that in thoſe very periods which ſeem'd ſo full, there is a mere emptineſs of thought. May I not ſay, at leaſt of theſe expreſſions, compared with others of a much plainer and leſs promiſing aſpect, what *Osborn* ſays[t], that in *Spain* men look wiſer than they are, and in

[f] *Solas captanti ſententias multas neceſſe eſt dicere leves, frigidas, ineptas. Non enim poteſt eſſe delectus ubi de numero laboratur..... Nec multas plerique ſententias dicunt, ſed omnia tanquam ſententias.* Quint. ibid.

[t] Advice, Sec. 1. §. 35.

England

England they are wiſer than they look. Upon my word, *Eudoxus*, you wou'd not imagine how uneaſy are grown to me thoſe promiſing, but falſe Styles, that *tantalize* one with a hoped-for taſte of ſolid ſenſe, and then put one off with a touch, that leaves you wiſhing for more, but wiſhing in vain. Even of the very beſt of them one may ſay, as I have been told *Callicrates* in another work [u] ſays of *Seneca*: *he moves by ſtart and ſally. He flaſhes a hint in your face and diſappears. This looks like an apparition of philoſophy.* Thus ſays he; and this, ſay I, makes me almoſt as uneaſy as if I were haunted with an apparition of a Ghoſt. DIAL. IV.

EUDOX. I muſt beg of you, *Cleander*, to get me a ſight of that, and what other books *Callicrates* has publiſh'd. For tho' I do not admire in general that way of Style, yet he has ſo much good ſenſe and wit, as one may eaſily perceive from this Book, that I ſhall be very glad to ſee whatever comes from ſo ingenious a pen. Now as for thoſe apparitions, they put me in mind of a compariſon I have read I know not where [w], that ſome ſorts of Styles are like *Phantoms of Magick*, which aſtoniſh the imagination,

[u] Preface to *Antoninus*'s Meditations.
[w] I think it is *Balzac*'s.

DIAL. IV. but pleaſe only vicious and depraved curioſities. This cannot, I believe, be more properly applied to any ſort of Style than to that we are now upon. And as thoſe depraved curioſities gain moſt upon ſoft heads and hard conſciences, ſo thoſe flaſhes, and hints, and apparitions of this magical Style, are moſt valued by weak judgments and ſtrong fancies. However I wou'd not have you take this for a reflection upon *Callicrates* or all his admirers. It may happen as well in matter of writing as in that of religion, that ſome ſenſible and worthy men, by the misfortune of education join'd with an unhappy intereſt, may be blinded, and engaged in errors; tho' commonly the unthinking, or the wicked, make the numbers of every falſe religion. The like, I ſay, happens often in matter of writing: even ſenſible men, whether by too great an affectation or ambition of ſhewing wit, or of pleaſing the publick in corrupt but prevailing humours, or ſome other ſuch motives, may fall into vaſt miſtakes, and by degrees increaſe, not in the number only, but in the opinion and value of their errors. Nay, oftentimes it is a ſharpneſs of wit that depraves the Style. *Chryſippus*, ſays *Seneca*[x], *was a great man, and of an acute wit. But the edge of it was ſo fine, that every thing*

[x] *In* L'Eſtrange's *Abſtract, Epiſt.* 2.

turned

turned it: and he might be ſaid in truth rather to prick the ſubject that he handled, than to pierce it through. This is often the character of *Seneca* himſelf, and commonly that of ſententious Authors. They never follow on a thought to a juſt length. From plain expreſſions (which generally they avoid) you are brought immediately to an unuſual metaphor; which is ſcarce finiſh'd, but there follows a quite diſparate notion. Then an affectation of *oppoſites*, which is a continual ſource of falſe eloquence, makes them ſeem acute, but you ſoon perceive the edge was too fine not to be eaſily turn'd. That ſame affectation makes it ſeem, as if the quarrelſome humour of the age had poſſeſſed ſome writers. Not only meaning their quarrels with one another, but alſo the wrangling of their own words. In ſome of them you will ſcarce find a quiet ſentence in a whole book. All is ſharp points and oppoſitions. Every word ſtands in battle againſt it's briſk *antitheſis*, and is ſure to meet a ſharp dapper adverſary before the end of the ſentence. *Solinus* [y] tells us of a ſtone, and it is counted a Gem too, by name *Syderitis*, which breeds diſcord where-ever it comes. Certainly theſe men have mixt in their Ink the duſt of this ſtone, ſince almoſt every period is *antithetical* and

DIAL. IV.

[y] Hiſtor. Nat. cap. 40. *Syderitis maleficus, quocunque inferatur, diſcordias excitat.*

DIAL. IV. quarrelling one part with the other, and frequently jarring with ſenſe and reaſon.

CRITOM. I perceive you are both ſtrangely averſe from conciſe Styles. Nor will I deny but they have great part of the inconveniences you have mention'd; yet methinks it is better to lie under thoſe inconveniences, than return to long rolling periods, that fill each of them a page; where reaſon is ſpread too far to retain it's force, and is commonly loſt in a croud of words. Senſe ſeldoms thrives under a multiplicity of terms, which are like a luxuriancy of leaves and branches not carefully pruned, that hinder the grapes from recovering warmth enough to come to maturity. 'Tis with long periods as with long bodies. They are generally the weakeſt, and commonly not more languid than obſcure; becauſe clogg'd with more than one *parentheſis*, and with thoughts foreign from the main ſubject, and burthenſome to the memory. They tire you out with a long expectation, and always come too late with their ſenſe. Whereas in a ſhort Style, you have the advantage of knowing immediately what the Author deſigns.

CLEAND. You will perhaps wonder if I tell you one is longer a learning the meaning of theſe conciſe writers, than of thoſe who are diffuſe. Yet ſo it is. For, as I have already told

told you, they only *tantalize* with a ſlight touch, or as *Callicrates* expreſſed it, they *ſtart*, and *ſally*, and *hint*, and *flaſh*, and *diſappear*. They never give you a diſtinct view of their meaning. By never allowing thoughts their full length of expreſſion, they ſay them over twenty different ways, but never ſay it full out, tiring you with a great many unfiniſh'd turns, ever beginning and never concluding. *Bartoli* [1] ſpeaking to this purpoſe, compares ſuch writers to thoſe who beginning daily new methods of life, never properly lead any courſe of life, while they are continually beginning to live. DIAL. IV.

Victuros agimus ſemper, neque vivimus unquam——ſays *Manilius*.

Dicturos agimus ſemper, neque dicimus unquam,

ſays *Bartoli*, who is very happy and fertile in that way of applications.

CRITOM. Well, I declare this is a very unexpected *Paradox*, that ſhorteſt Styles ſhould of all Styles be the longeſt. Yet, beſides that I have heard of *long-ſhort-lung'd Seneca*, upon this account; I have obſerved in late Authors, that altho' I did not reflect whence it proceeded, yet they ſeem'd either long in concluding, or not to conclude at all, while every line look'd very like a con-

[1] *Huomo di lettere*, ſub finem.

DIAL. IV. cluding ſtroke. And to ſpeak the truth, I perceive they were often beginning the ſame thing, and after all ſtill left it unfiniſh'd, becauſe the whole extent of the notion wou'd not enter into the limits of a ſhort conciſe period. But now, tho' I long to hear your opinion of exactneſs of truth in writings, yet before we leave the point I propoſed of diffuſe Styles, pray what do you think of that way of writing which is commonly call'd a *Torrent of Eloquence?*

EUDOX. *Stratonicus* being ask'd whether round or long ſhips were the ſecureſt, anſwer'd, *Thoſe which keep in the haven.* Thus when ask'd whether ſhort or long Styles are beſt, I will beg leave to anſwer, thoſe that keep within limits, ſecure from the inconveniences of either. If you will ſtill demand a more diſtinct anſwer, I will deſire *Cleander*'s leave to declare againſt the long *Port-Royal* Style,

CLEAND. You ſuppoſe me to be, I perceive, in my former opinion of thoſe Authors. But let me aſſure you, I have abated very much of my former admiration. I ſhall take an occaſion hereafter to diſcourſe with you more at large upon them. At preſent, as to their long Style, I think it leſs to be compared to a torrent, than to a dull, languid ſtream.

EUDOX.

EUDOX. Their Style I particularly mention'd upon a ſmile of *Critomachus*, which made me judge he meant thoſe gentlemen who continually uſed to cry one another up for *Torrents of Eloquence*. Now to ſpeak more univerſally of long periods, I think it unneceſſary to ſay much. For the chief faults in that kind, have been ſufficiently touch'd. I will add, that nothing can be more inſipid, than to run all notions and ſubjects into a prefix'd length of expreſſion, and force every thought to fill a ſet number of lines. For it makes the diſcourſe both weak and tedious, as was already obſerved, and puts the reader's memory, breath, and patience, to a very ungrateful trial. Such are, for example, two of the firſt periods you meet with in Mr. *Dodwell's Letters of Advice* [a]. I fell upon them at a meer caſual opening of the book. They are both immediately together. The firſt has two large parentheſes, and ſix and thirty lines; for I had the curioſity to count them. The ſecond has three parentheſes, and about four and forty lines. Now as for ſuch furious Authors (for *Cicero* [b] gives them no better name) even where they are free from downright flatneſs, and ſeem to run on

[a] Letter 1. §. 8, 9.

[b] *Quid eſt enim tam furioſum quàm verborum vel optimorum ſonitus inanis, nullâ ſubjectâ ſententiâ.* Cic. de Orat. lib. 2.

DIAL. IV. with impetuosity of Style, as they term it; yet they seldom take their rise, their course, or their fall, from the nature of their subject. Where that requires it, let the discourse be vehement. But let it be vehement only in proportion with the matter. A moderation must be always kept, not to degenerate into meer hurry, noise and tumult; and if you will let me use the expression, not to rant, and swell, and foam in every thing alike, without measure or rule. In a word, it must be as *Tasso*[c] says of *Godfrey*'s leading his army, That it was swift, but regularly swift.

Rapido si, mà rapido con legge.

Rapidity of Style, when irregular, is only posting on to nonsense.

CLEAND. Upon these, and the like reflections, we shall now all sufficiently agree, that altho' a *Torrent of Pleasure* is a consecrated expression, and a *Torrent of Eloquence* has the authority of a long prescription to pass for a commendation, yet as both those kinds of torrents wou'd rather destroy than please, unless proportion'd to their subjects, so the latter is too seldom secured from danger, to be the endeavour of a discreet Author. And therefore generally speaking, we shall each of us conclude with *Boileau*[d],

[c] *Gierusalemme.* Cant. 3. Stanza 2.
[d] Art of Poetry. Canto 1.

I'm

DIAL. IV.

I'm far more pleas'd to ſee a river glide
Smoothly along the verdant meadow's ſide,
Than rapid torrents, which from mountains thrown,
With noiſe and violence bear all things down;
Deſtroying countries where they overflow,
And carrying deſolation as they go.

EUDOX. Nor do I queſtion but we ſhall hereafter always think, not torrents, but noble rivers are a fitter example of Style; according to thoſe verſes ſo much, and ſo deſervedly admir'd by Mr. *Dryden* in Sir *John Denham*, where ſpeaking of the *Thames*, he ſays [e],

O could I flow like thee, and make thy ſtream
My great example, as it is my theme!
Tho' deep, yet clear; tho' gentle, yet not dull;
Strong, without rage; without o'erflowing, full.

To conclude, if ever any thing of impetuoſity is allowable, it muſt be ſtill according to the nature of water, which if it meets with ſteep and broken ways, precipitates down with noiſe; and, if I may

[e] In *Cooper's Hill.*

ſay

DIAL. IV. ſay it, foams at the fall: But if it meets with a plain, runs quietly and ſmoothly on, with a clear and equal courſe. Thus periods are to be rapid and broken, or ſmooth and equal, according to the ſubject upon which they run.

CRITOM. I can't tell whether we ſhall come ſo near an agreement concerning exactneſs of thought and truth. For methinks I foreſee you will be more ſevere in this than in any of the former points.

EUDOX. And certainly, ſince truth and right reaſon are preferable to words, it ought not to ſeem ſtrange, if in thoſe there is required a greater care and exactneſs. To be plain then, I think there ought to be almoſt the ſame ſeverity in other pieces of eloquence, as in ſermons, in which the judicious *Rapin*[t] will allow no thought, tho' ever ſo pretty in appearance, unleſs it has ſolidity and truth. Tell me what you pleaſe of agreeable illuſions, deceitful charms, pleaſing cheats, happy errors, and all that. Let Poets have the uſe of them, and under many reſtrictions too. In ſerious writings I hate that juggling, and deteſt an Author, who thinks me eaſy enough to be pleas'd with ſounding nonſenſe, or to be convinc'd with a jingling folly, or a queint and airy

[t] Reflections upon the Eloquence of the Pulpit.

flam,

ſham, or thoſe expreſſions which I uſe to call hypocritical. Such I mean, as are bad, but ſeem good. For they are alſo like hypocrites in their fate; and accordingly moſt deteſted when once diſcovered. Plain down-right nonſenſe may be pitied. But nonſenſe cover'd with the mask of ſenſe, is never to be pardon'd, whether the mask falls off by itſelf, or is pull'd off upon ſuſpicion. It is like coining falſe money, and ſhou'd be a capital crime in the republick of learning. DIAL. IV.

CRITOM. But, Sir, that ſeverity in what you call exactneſs of thought and truth, would be too great a conſtraint, and hinder the ſublime pleaſure of *Exaggerations* or *Amplifications*, which ſure you will allow in true eloquence.

EUDOX. As for conſtraint, methinks it ſhou'd not be thought a great one to require reaſon and truth. And as for exaggerations, they muſt be allowed ſome place in eloquence. But then extravagance muſt not paſs for exaggeration. Even poets muſt keep within bounds. Beſides, true rhetorical exaggerations or amplifications don't conſiſt in falſe additional reaſons, but in ſetting off the true reaſon with ſomething of a greater air than it abſolutely requires. Whatever is beyond a moderate liberty of enlarging upon truth, is to be rejected. In ſhort,

DIAL. IV. ſhort, nothing ſhou'd be paſs'd over as an allowable exaggeration, unleſs both grounded upon a ſolid truth, and ſupported by veriſimilitude.

CLEAND. Methinks what is commonly meant by exaggerations, is not ſo properly the fault of thoſe Styles we have chiefly conſider'd. The conciſe eloquence is not of that enlarging kind. Not that I think only a long diffuſive Style can exaggerate; for the vaſteſt exaggerations may be in ſingle metaphors and words: but that it is properly in a kind of *Aſiatick* eloquence, they enter as it were with licence even of Cenſors.

CRITOM. You have prevented me in what I was going to offer in defence of our late Authors. If you mean that libertine eloquence which diffuſes itſelf through all the vulgar figures of enlarging, moſt certainly they cannot be found guilty of exaggerations. But taking the word for a certain noble boldneſs of expreſſion, which raiſes and enlarges a thought, it is, I own, their common practice. But ſure that is no fault.

EUDOX. Their hardy and ventureſome expreſſions, what with ſome lucky hits of metaphor, and ſmartneſs of *antitheſis*, or the like, does often give a kind of vigour and *Brio* (if the word is ſufficiently naturaliz'd)

ralliz'd) to their lines, and muſt be commended when they paſs not the bounds of diſcretion. But when in their bold flights, you have meer ſophiſtry and ſounding fallacy, the finer the words are, the more they will diſpleaſe. DIAL. IV.

CRITOM. Granting the fallacy, if clear, will hardly be excuſed; yet if plauſibly manag'd, it will pleaſe, even when you find it does not convince.

EUDOX. It may ſo in little ſlight poems, in compliments of ceremony, and ſuch other compoſitions. But hardly ever in ſerious ſubjects. Perhaps not even in great and noble poems, excepting ſome certain places wherein it ſufficiently appears the poet wou'd unbend his own, and his reader's thoughts, by uſing the liberty of his art, which being licenſed for fable, may be allow'd to treſpaſs upon truth. It is the undiſputed privilege of *Parnaſſus*. Thus every one will allow, and approve theſe lines of *Milton*[s],

Now gentle gales
Fanning their odoriferous wings, diſpenſe
Native perfumes, and whiſper whence they ſtole
Thoſe balmy ſpoils.

[s] *Lib.* 4. ver. 157.

In

DIAL. IV. In him many ſuch ſtrokes are met with, wherein you ſee the falſity, and yet are pleaſed. As again in the ſame book, where he amuſes you agreeably in the deſcription of Paradiſe, leading you through

Umbrageous grotts and caves
Of cool receſs, o'er which the mantling vine
Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps
Luxuriant.

With the charms of theſe walks, and with viewing the other beauties of the place, he ſo amuſes you, that even the mixture of heatheniſh fables in a ſacred ſubject, is almoſt overlook'd in the inſinuating air of his verſes, and you ſtartle not, you are even pleas'd to meet *Pan* leading up a dance of eternal ſpring, with the *Graces* and Hours, in theſe following lines [h]:

Aires, vernal aires,
Breathing the ſmell of field and grove, attune
The trembling leaves, while univerſal Pan
Knit with the Graces *and the* Hours *in dance,*
Lead on th' eternal ſpring.

Where ſomething of this nature does not give a particular licence, nothing but exact truth is to have place, eſpecially in proſe.

[h] *Lib. eodem. ver.* 264.

CRITOM.

CRITOM. Give me leave to repeat what I have already ſaid, that ſeverity in this, as in other points, is often carried too far. By a habit or humour of examining every thing by certain ſpeculative rules, people come to call in queſtion the common practice, and what has paſſed for the brighteſt ſtrokes of the beſt writers; and to condemn thoſe thoughts which have been handed down from paſt ages, and conſtantly received with the greateſt approbation. For example; *Pompey*, you know, when ſome important affairs of the common-wealth required his departing from a maritime town, and every body repreſented to him, that in ſo hard and ſtormy weather, he could not go to ſea, without imminent danger of his life, anſwer'd, *My voyage is neceſſary, but my life is not ſo.* This anſwer, which is much commended by *Callicrates*, and for many ages paſt, had been look'd upon as equally noble and ſmart, is condemn'd by *Balſac*[1] for having the appearance only, not the reality of an ingenious reply. The peremptory critick gives this reaſon. Becauſe, ſays he, it deſtroys it ſelf, and implies a contradiction. For ſince life is the origin of all human actions, it follows that *Pompey* cou'd not embark, unleſs he lived; this being a contradiction, ſay the criticks. Very

[1] Vide *Maniére de Penſer. Dial.* 1.

DIAL. IV. philoſophically indeed! But how can they imagine the world, who ſo long applauded that anſwer of *Pompey*, ſhou'd never reflect that to embark and act upon the orders of the *Senate*, it was pretty neceſſary to be alive.

CLEAND. And certainly it is not hard to conceive that to ſave his honour, and ſhew his deference to the ſenate, it might be more neceſſary to go to ſea, with danger of his life, than to ſecure his life by neglect of his duty, or of his honour. Which is manifeſtly the meaning of his reply.

EUDOX. It is by that very reaſon that *Bouhours*[k], who profeſſes ſo great a nicety in that kind, defends that anſwer of *Pompey*. *Balzac* eſpecially, ſhou'd take little freedom in Criticiſms of that nature. For he will generally be leſs able to bear the like ſeverity: As when he proves it is not inconvenient to be a priſoner, becauſe ſome people keep their chamber of their own accord. But not to mention ſuch ſmall matters as this, for ſuch occur almoſt perpetually in him; let us take an example of a higher nature. When *Marius* in his misfortunes was forced to hide himſelf in the ruins of *Carthage*, Sure, ſays he, that

[k] Ibidem.

great

great but ruin'd city, and that great but unfortunate man, view'd each other with aſtoniſhment; that *Marius* comforted *Carthage*, and *Carthage*, *Marius*; and the mutual compariſon of their miſeries made both of them pardon the Gods and Fortune. He carries the point ſtill farther, and adds: That *Carthage*, after that example of *Marius*, could no longer wonder at her own ruin; nor *Marius* dare to bear his misfortunes with impatience in the preſence of *Carthage*. Here if *Balzac* were to be examin'd by that rigour of truth he exacts of *Pompey*, this ſad interview between unfortunate *Marius* and poor *Carthage* would make a very odd figure. For tho' both *Lucan* and *Velleius Paterculus* [1] have ſomething of the ſame thought, yet they only touch upon it, without making it childiſh by carrying it too far. DIAL. IV.

CLEAND. What *Balzac* could ſay in defence of this place, I know not. But I know he would not mend the matter by ſaying, as he does of ſome in another place, that we are *Judges without judgment, and Authors without authority*. To pardon him this wretched *Pun*, it muſt be granted he is very often guilty of falſity; that is, of advancing beyond truth, and falling into unpardonable ſophiſtry.

[1] *Apud* Bouhours, *ibid.*

DIAL. IV.

CRITOM. I ſhall not undertake *Balzac*'s defence, tho' you both ſeem reſolved to join his cauſe with that of ſeveral modern writers. I had rather paſs over that, and ask you, *Eudoxus*, an example wherein a Thought, tho' in rigour falſe, nay even ridiculous if brought into Syllogiſm, yet fails not to be receiv'd with applauſe. And moreover, I wou'd know the reaſon why they may ſometimes pleaſe.

EUDOX. In grave ſubjects, and with a judicious reader, I ſhall not eaſily grant there is any ſuch thing as pleaſing with falſe reaſons when they are diſcover'd. In other occaſions they may pleaſe when managed with moderation, and when only preſented to pleaſure the fancy, without any deſign of impoſing upon the underſtanding. *Voiture* frequently ſucceeds in that kind. Writing to a *French* officer who was taken priſoner, he tells him that "he ſignalizes himſelf "every where, even in thoſe occaſions "which are unfortunate to others; and "bids him by no means complain of for-"tune, ſince if ſhe is not on his ſide, ſhe "takes care to have him on the ſide ſhe fa-"vours; and that at the end of all Battles "he is always on the victorious ſide." Here the *Sophiſm* is certainly great enough. Yet all things conſider'd, I believe even Mr. *Girac* wou'd not condemn the compliment.

CLEAND.

CLEAND. So true it is that every thing is graceful when uſed in its proper way and place. Thoughts otherwiſe equally falſe, and otherwiſe much alike, are very different accordingly as they are uſed, and what is inſupportable in ſome occaſions, is graceful in others, or at leaſt excuſable. Thus every body ſees the deteſtable childiſhneſs of theſe two verſes of *Theophile* [m];

Ha! voicy le poignard qui du ſang de ſon maître
S'eſt ſouillé lachement! Il en rougit le traitre.

Ha! here's the ſword which his own maſter kill'd,
The traitor bluſhes with the blood he ſpill'd.

And yet when *Pliny* ſays that *human blood revenges it ſelf of the ſword by ruſt* [n], though both thoughts have a great affinity, and are equally falſe, (for it is equally falſe that blood makes the ſword bluſh for ſhame, as that it makes it ruſty in revenge) yet both are not equally faulty. And perhaps the latter might be defended from the cenſure of *Bouhours* [o]: eſpecially taken with reference to what *Pliny* ſays a little before, and ſup-

[m] Cited by Boileau.
[n] *Sanguis humanus à ferro rubigine ſe ulciſcitur*, Plin. Hiſt. lib. 34. cap. 14.
[o] *Maniere de penſer*. Dialog. 2.

DIAL. IV. poſing that Iron commonly takes ruſt ſooner from human blood than from any other.

CRITOM. Something more might be added in defence of *Pliny*, not only becauſe there is not ſuch a *puerility* in his expreſſion, but alſo from the common opinion of *Antipathies* even in inanimate things. For whether the new *Philoſophers* have ſufficiently proved thoſe notions falſe or not, yet methinks old Authors may be allowed to ſpeak according to old opinions. And by the by, I have heard many accuſe *Bouhours* of refining too much in his Criticiſms, and that a perſon of learning and quality in *Italy* has call'd him roundly to account for his cenſures in ſeveral points.

EUDOX. I have heard of that *Italian* too, but could not yet meet with his works. Nor do I believe he will convince that *Bouhours*'s *Maniére de Penſer* is not a very proper book to teach many excellent notions upon the rules of framing a right judgment of the art of writing. Tho' in ſeveral things I believe him ſomething national in his opinions, and as much too ſevere in ſome caſes, as too indulgent in others. Particularly where he examines the praiſes given to the late King, he ſeldom condemns the thoughts, though ſeveral mention'd in that book; and ſtill more in his collection of *witty Thoughts*, *Penſées Ingenieuſes*, have the ſame faults which

which he finds with writings upon other ſubjects. Thus he defends that bold ſtroke of *Boileau*[p], where ſpeaking of the paſſage of the *Rhine*, and having told us the old ſtory of fortune's doubting for a while, he adds: DIAL. IV.

Mais Loüis d'un régard ſçait bientôt la fixer:
Le deſtin à ſes yeux n'oſeroit balancer.

That is:

But *Loüis'* Looks ſoon force her to comply:
Not even Fate dares balance in his eye.

Theſe verſes, ſays *Bouhours*, are ſtrong, but not overbold, becauſe they do not ſpeak of deſtiny in general, but of the deſtiny of war, and becauſe the preſence of ſo courageous a Prince made his ſoldiers invincible. This defence is viſibly weak, and ſtill more inſufficient to excuſe thoſe wherein the King is made abſolute maſter of the fate both of war and peace. Nor can I ſee how they are more allowable than the rant of *Almanzor*[q]:

There's not a ſtar of thine dares ſtay with thee,
I'll whiſtle thy tame fortune after me;
And whirl Fate with me whereſoe'er I fly,
As winds do ſtorms before them in the ſky.

[p] Epître au Roy.
[q] *Act* 3. *End.*

DIAL. IV. For I can't ſee why Fortune may not be made tame enough to fear the whiſtle, as well as the looks of a *Hero*.

CRITOM. I perceive at leaſt by that example of *Bouhours*, that criticks are to be read with caution, leſt they ſhould impoſe upon us their national, or other prejudices, for certain Rules and Standards of judgment.

EUDOX. Nay moreover, caution is not only to be had where one may have reaſon to ſuſpect any prejudice of Nation, Party, *Emuloſity*, and the like; but even where no ſuch ſuſpicion ſeems to have place. And I verily believe that ſometimes what ſeems to be the effect of prejudice in men of party, or an affectation of nicety and ſharp penetration, is only the effect of an accidental keenneſs of humour. What influences in writing, may do no leſs in judging. Now you may remember who concludes there is a good conſtitution of body and mind required to good writing[f]. And tho' he ſays it of the ſpirit of Poetry, and in a poetical Image, yet it is true of proſe alſo, that like the *Halcyon* it muſt have fair weather to breed in. He adds, one may ſee "through "the Style of *Ovid de Triſtibus* the dejected "condition of ſpirit with which he writ it,

[f] *Mr.* Cowley *in the preface to his works.*

"and

" and that the cold of the country had ſtruck " through all his faculties, and benumbed " the very feet of his verſes." Thus we may be ſometimes too cold, at other times too hot, to judge aright. And why may not ſpleen vary our judgment of books, as well as of perſons we converſe with? Why may we not be ſometimes of a milder diſpoſition and inclin'd to favour, at other times moroſe and only tuned to rigour. Now I hope you will be leſs difficult in believing I am not for carrying matters too far, while I give ſo large an allowance for caution againſt criticiſm. DIAL. IV.

CRITOM. Believe me, Sir, you want no Apology with me. If I have ſeem'd upon occaſions to think you inclin'd to an extremity of rigour, you may paſs it upon the account of my long averſion from criticks. I begin now to ſee clearer into theſe matters, and find a great diſtance between licentiouſneſs and freedom of thought and expreſſion, and how reaſonable it is to prefer exactneſs of ſolidity and truth, to all the flaſh and jingle of the gayeſt words, that will not bear a ſober reflection. So that hereafter, when I ſeem to oppoſe, it will be chiefly to give occaſion to a farther explication, or at moſt ſome ſmall remnant of an old habit, which cannot be totally conquer'd but with time.

DIAL. IV.

CLEAND. This fair proteſtation makes me bold to mention a remark, which, for fear you ſhould think me too much a convert of *Eudoxus*, I wou'd not propoſe when we were talking of *Balzac*'s ſeverity to *Pompey*. He is far more indulgent to *Auguſtus*, upon an occaſion where I think he wou'd have found more reaſon for a cenſure. The People of *Taragone* having follow'd the example of ſeveral other cities in erecting temples to *Auguſtus*, ſent a ſolemn embaſſy ſome while after to acquaint him that a Palm-tree was grown out of the altar dedicated to him. Upon this it might be expected that a heathen Emperor wou'd have diſpatched the tidings of ſo extraordinary news throughout the Empire, and order'd it to be regiſter'd in the Capitol, and the like. But *Auguſtus* only anſwer'd with a ſmile: *I ſee then you often burn ſacrifices upon the altar you have erected to my honour.* Thus he prefer'd the ſatisfaction of venting a witticiſm, or rather a banter, to the publick opinion of ſo great a miracle. *Balzac* wonders this witty anſwer is not related by *Suetonius* nor *Macrobius*. It ſeems to me more ſtrange to find it in *Quintilian*, ſo good a judge: tho' he only juſt mentions it[f]. It ſeems to me to have only a falſe

[f] AUGUSTUS *nunciantibus* TARRACONENSIBUS *palmam in ejus arâ creatam, apparet, inquit, Quàm ſæpè accendatis?* Quint. lib. 6. cap. 4. poſt medium.

ap-

pearance of wit. For if you once ſuppoſe a miracle (as might ſure be ſuppoſed in favour of a new God) the growing of the Palm-tree does not prove few ſacrifices were burnt upon the altar; ſince it might grow by divine power even amidſt the flames, and ſpring up in a ſhort interval between two ſacrifices. If you think I am miſtaken in my opinion upon this paſſage, I ſhall eaſily ſubmit. DIAL. IV.

CRITOM. I do not ſee how to defend that anſwer, unleſs by ſaying *Auguſtus* had a mind to put off the putid flattery with a jeſt; and that in a jeſt, ſolidity of reaſon is not to be required. But in this anſwer alſo I ſee an inconſequence in the character of the Perſon, which will, I fear, ruin the defence. For ſince *Auguſtus* accepted the honour of Temples, it was too late to refuſe the honour of a miracle. And moreover, altho' in ſome occaſions Princes may, perhaps, but with great precautions, take the liberty of jeſting, yet certainly it misbeſeems the character of a great and wiſe Prince, to take that liberty in anſwer to the ſolemn addreſſes of ſubjects declaring their reſpects to him in the higheſt manner. However, ſuppoſing it to be an allowable jeſt in other regards, I wou'd willingly ask you, if you think it to be rejected becauſe it includes a *Sophiſm*? And the ſame queſtion I wou'd propoſe univerſally of all Epigrams, Jeſts,

DIAL. IV. Pleaſantries, and whatever in fine comes under the name of a witticiſm.

CLEAND. Alas! Sir, if that was my opinion, I ſhou'd not dare to own it. It wou'd bring too many young and brisk enemies upon me. But in effect it is not my opinion. Though I believe it is want of truth, which makes moſt of that ſort of wit either appear putid upon reflection, or ſeldom pleaſe but at a firſt reading.

EUDOX. Eſpecially if the occaſion upon which they are uſed be ſerious and important. For in ſuch compoſitions, nothing can pleaſe an attentive, judicious reader, that is not reaſonable. And nothing is reaſon but what is true. Nay, altho' the deſign is merely a pleaſantry of humour and fancy, yet if carried too far, it will certainly diſpleaſe. Upon this account I am now inclin'd to admit the cenſure of *Bouhours* [t] of *Quevedo*'s verſes upon the adventure of *Orpheus* going to hell for his wife. I formerly admired them ſo much as to tranſlate them into *Latin*. I will take the liberty to read them to you as a piece of my younger ſtudies, tho' I am ſenſible now the verſification is very faulty.

[t] *Maniére de Penſer*, Dialog. 2. poſt medium.

Al infierno el Tracio Orpheo
Su muger baxò à buſcar:
Que no pudo à peor lugar
Llevarlo tan mal deſſeo.
Cantò y al mayor tormento
Pusò ſuſpenſion & eſpanto
Mas que lo dulce del canto
La novedad del intento.
El triſte Dios offendido
De tan eſtranno rigor
La pena que hallò mayor
Fue bolverle a ſer marido.
Y aunque ſu muger le diò
Por pena de ſu peccado;
Por premio de lo cantado
Perder la facilitò.

Uxorem quærens, ſtygias deſcendit ad undas
Orpheus, & nigri lurida regna Dei.
Ducere nempe aliò haud poterat tam inſana cupido,
Nec meliùs quæri tantum aliunde malum.
Mox ubi tentavit Citharam, pœnæ immemor hæſit
Styx tota, argutis obſtupefacta modis.
Præcantu tamen illa magis (quod credere fas eſt)
Quærendæ uxoris conſilium ſtupuit.
Aſt intermiſſas Pluto *indignatus* Averni
Pœnas, hoc vati ſupplicium ſtatuit.
Mortales tanti metuant ut fata furoris,
Tu rurſum Iſmarides, *eſto maritus, ait.*
Dixerat:

DIAL. IV.

Dixerat: extemplò vati ſua redditur uxor,
Non dubia audaci pœna futura viro.
Carmen at argutum ne omni mercede careret,
Qui mox uxorem perderet, edocuit.

Now, as I believe it will hardly be deny'd, but theſe verſes of *Quevedo* have a great deal of wit and fancy, ſo I think it may be granted they have too much of both. Thoughts of that kind ſhould be very ſhort. For when they go beyond the length of a ſudden kind of flaſh, the affectation is apparent, and whatever appears affected, is viſibly falſe, and conſequently diſpleaſes the mind, whoſe proper object is truth in reality, or at leaſt in appearance. But as for compoſitions of that nature, I ſhall recommend to you the diſſertation before the *Delectus Epigrammatum*[a], which is a collection of choice Epigrams of *Martial* and others. And here, if you pleaſe, we will break off our preſent ſubject, ſince we are call'd to ſupper. To-morrow we may purſue the matter.

[a] Edit. Lond. an. 1683.

THE

THE FIFTH DIALOGUE,

BETWEEN

CRITOMACHUS, EUDOXUS, *and* CLEANDER.

CRITOM. I HAVE read over to-day that diſſertation you recommended at the end of yeſterday's meeting, with attention; and I muſt own it is a very pretty, and, I think, a ſolid piece. But I fear it would make *a dreadful devaſtation of wit*, in the common notion of the word, if compoſitions of that nature were to be examined by thoſe nice rules.

EUDOX. What you call with a ſmile, the devaſtation of wit, would however be no more than denying that to be true wit which is not true ſenſe. The Rules, I take for true: though perhaps the application of them is ſometimes miſtaken by that very author. Thus, to mention no others, I wou'd beg

DIAL. V. beg his leave to excuſe the Epigram of *Vulteius* upon a noble monument erected for a very undeſerving man. The Poet ſuppoſes, while he was weeping at the tomb, one reproach'd him for weeping upon the perſon who had been the plague of his country; upon which he replies, *You miſtake me: I weep not for the loſs of the man, but of the monument* °.

Næ tu quiſquis es, impius videris
Peſtem qui Patriæ doles ſepultam.
Illi contra ego. Falleris: ſepulchri
Jacturam fleo, non fleo ſepulti.

He pretends the Poet has here miſtaken the true and rational ſentiments, which ought not to be of tears, but of indignation. But why might it not move tears to ſee villany honour'd like merit; eſpecially ſince there are tears of indignation as well as of grief. It is perhaps harder to juſtify the terms of *loſs of the monument*, only as it was unjuſtly flung away upon ſo undeſerving a ſubject. But to examine pieces of this kind would lead us too vaſt a length, and our preſent diſcourſe regards chiefly the rules of writing in graver compoſitions. Speaking then of ſuch, over and above what has been already ſaid upon the requiſite truth, they ſhould be

° *Diſſertatio proximè citata.*

true

true not only in each *Aſſertion* and *Illation*, but in the very ſmalleſt parts, and in every word. For without diſputing whether ſingle words or *apprehenſions*, are in rigour of *Logick* true or falſe, yet there is in them a very near affinity with truth and falſity. Which kind of falſity is very incident to ſuch methods of writing as we have been conſidering, and is chiefly obſervable in their metaphors. DIAL. V.

CRITOM. Under favour, all metaphors if diſcuſs'd to this rigour, are falſe: As *Flowers of Eloquence*, *Flaſhes of Wit*, a *ſtormy Mind*, and a thouſand more, ſo much in uſe. Muſt all ſuch be diſcarded?

EUDOX. By no means. But as ſome metaphors, by uſe and a natural kind of ſimilitude, are ſcarce any longer to be counted metaphors, but ſeem turn'd into proper terms; ſo others, although leſs uſual, and more apparently figurative, yet are very allowable by the connatural likeneſs and proportion they bear with the ſubject to which they are apply'd. But one who has not the diſcernment between the uſe and abuſe of *metaphors*, *images*, and *compariſons*, will fall into ſeveral abſurdities. I wiſh ſome late Authors could be excuſable in this kind. But methinks I could eaſily give you a long catalogue of expreſſions which wou'd ſcarce ſeem better than to talk with *Feltham* of being *nipt to a benumbing with icy thumbs of winter*; or with *Cleveland* to call the Sun,

DIAL. V. Sun, a *coal-pit rampant*; or with *Fleckno*, to ſay *admiration is the drunkenneſs of the underſtanding*; or call ſilence *ſtill-born* and *the floodgate of the deeper heart, the froſt of the mouth, and thaw of the mind.*

CLEAND. Upon this point of truth, exactneſs, likeneſs, and proportion of Metaphors, I wonder'd to find *Emanuel Teſauro* ſo very rigorous in ſome places of his *Cannocchiale*. Particularly [a] where ſpeaking of what the *Italians* call *Impreſe*, and we generally confound under the common name of *Emblems*; he obſerves that altho' every metaphor is a fiction, yet it muſt be likely and grounded in nature. For, ſays he, when you take a metaphor from a *Chimerical* object, you build an appearance of truth upon an apparent falſity. And therefore he adds, that in true eloquence it is more allowable to call a flatterer the *Rock* than the *Scylla* of Princes; becauſe the former is a true and natural object, the other is imaginary and fabulous: And conſequently, tho' ingenious in appearance, yet is not ſolid. He adds moreover, it is truer wit to find out the ſimilitude and relation between real objects, than in forged inventions, which have no limits, and may be vary'd and carry'd on at pleaſure, while truth and reality have their determinate bounds. Upon

[a] *Canoc.* Cap. 15. Teſi. 6.

theſe

theſe conſiderations, he excludes poetical fictions from the body of an Emblem. DIAL. V.

EUDOX. That Author is very far from ſticking cloſe to the Rules he preſcribes, as may be ſeen in ſeveral of his works. One or two places I have here noted, which I believe neither of you will much excuſe. They come pretty near to the purpoſe in hand, and are ſingular enough to be mention'd at leaſt by the by. They occur'd to me as I was reflecting upon a common Saying, that what is reaſon in one country and language, will be every where reaſonable. Which ſaying is, I think, chiefly to be underſtood of the ſubſtance of the reaſon, while the way of expreſſion may ſeem connatural to the *Italians*, for example, and not at all to the *Engliſh* Tongue. Thus ſpeaking of a nice piece of Eloquence which will bear the eye and cenſure of the moſt accurate Reader, we ſhould not be allow'd to ſay; *not a word of it enters the eye, without paſſing under the triumphal arch of the admiring eyebrow.* Yet when *Teſauro* in an academical diſcourſe call'd *il Judicio* [a] ſaid, *Ni una parola entra per l' occhio, che non paſſi ſotto l'arco triumphale del ciglio ammiratore*: I queſtion not but he was much applauded for ſo noble an expreſſion.

[a] *Sopra il Talento di due famoſi Predicatori* l'Albrici *et* l'Orimbelli.

DIAL. V. The ſame I believe of what he ſays in another academical diſcourſe, which he calls *Il Parallelo della vita et del honore*; that *Honour is an immortality which cuts the wings of time to write our praiſes, and ſteals the ſithe of death to mow the fields of glory. Tarpa le penne al Tempo per iſcrivere le noſtre lodi, & fura la falce à morte per mieter campi di gloria.*

CRITOM. Perhaps ſuch thoughts ſeem leſs unnatural to the *Italians*, not only by the character of their language, but becauſe there may poſſibly be in their heads as well as in their towns, ſome ruins of their former martial glory, and triumphant arches. Nor yet will I own our language and genius have leſs of what is truly noble, though they require a more natural and moderate tone.

EUDOX. Beſides falling into expreſſions of that kind, or ſuch others as we have talked of in matter of metaphors, transferr'd terms, images, and repreſentations, an exact author will avoid ſeveral that are leſs obſervable. Such as are ſome of thoſe you will find in this little *French* diſſertation [c] upon exactneſs of thought and expreſſion. For example: this Author finds fault with *Voiture*, for ſaying, *I do not yet find the effect of your prediction.* Becauſe, ſays he, predictions do not cauſe the things fore-

[c] *De la Juſteſſe.*

told;

told; and therefore he ſhould not have ſaid the effect, but the truth of your prediction. DIAL. V.

CRITOM. I perceive indeed that expreſſion is not exact. Yet as the fault is only obſervable to very accurate Readers, I ſhould fear too great a ſcrupuloſity, if I gave way to ſuch reflections. At this rate, many elegant expreſſions of the beſt Authors, muſt be condemn'd. Thus *Cicero* will be carpt at for ſaying *quædam ſuavitas coloris*; nor ſhall we be allow'd with him to ſay a picture has a great *delicacy and ſweetneſs of colours*, becauſe ſweetneſs belongs to the taſte, and colour to the Eye. In this kind I was ſtrangely ſurpriz'd at thoſe antient Criticks[d], who from obſervations of that nature, blame a ſentence of *Cicero* which ſeems to have a particular grace. The advantageous mien of *Marcus Cælius*, made him ſuffer ſome undeſerved aſperſions, becauſe he cou'd not hinder people from thinking him a handſome man. Whereupon *Cicero* ſays in his defence, *Id nunquam feret tam acerbè* MARCUS CÆLIUS, *ut eum pœniteat non eſſe deformem natum.* This they pretend is not exact, becauſe the word *pœnitet* agrees not to things which include no free and deliberate fault. In which, ſays *Gellius*, theſe men look upon themſelves to be very

[d] Gallus Aſinius, *and* Largus Licinius. *Apud A. Gel. Noct. Lib.* 17. *Cap.* 1.

DIAL. V. ſubtle[e]. But certainly by a very miſtaken ſubtilty. It is even becauſe repentance is relative to a crime; he might very properly ſay that *Cælius* did not repent that he was not born an ugly fellow, ſince there is no need of a real repentance for a falſe crime. As if he wou'd ſay, he would never repent while his only crime was, not to be a wry-mouth'd and ſquinting dwarf.

CLEAND. I am perſuaded your defence of *Cicero* is very juſt. However, that Criticiſm may give great light into the accuracy which is requiſite in the choice of words. And methinks by ſuch as the late examples, I ſee farther into the nature of an exact Style, than I ſhou'd by a long ſeries of rules.

EUDOX. It is farther to be obſerved, that excellent words, if not exactly ſorted together, make a vicious expreſſion. Juſt as excellent ſentences, if incoherent, make a very bad diſcourſe. In effect, what incoherent ſentences are to a diſcourſe, words of diſagreeing ideas are to each expreſſion. And therefore when they have very different or oppoſite notions, they are not to be join'd in the ſame period, unleſs one either corrects the vehemence, or inforces the weakneſs of the other, or by the very joining them together makes up a third di-

[e] *In quo ſibi viſi ſunt verborum penſitatores ſubtiliſſimi.* Ibid.

ſtinct

ſtinct and proportionable idea, rather than keep their primitive oppoſition. Examples have been already given in this kind. So I ſhall rather mention two or three which may hinder the remark from being carry'd too far. *Bellegarde* [f] finds fault with one for talking of *eyes arm'd with all their charms*, becauſe *arms*, and *charms*, raiſe different Ideas. This methinks is being over-apprehenſive of raiſing wars in the mind. And certainly that expreſſion has ſufficient defence from the arrows of *Cupid*. The ſame *Bellegarde* cenſures *St. Evremont* for ſaying *a ſource of apprehenſions and of tears*. A ſource of tears is regular, ſays this Critick; but a ſource of apprehenſions is no leſs unknown than the ſource of the *Nile*. Now I can ſee no reaſon for this remark, but to make way for that profound piece of Erudition concerning the unknown ſource of that famous River. As for the fault he finds in *burning the world by a deluge of fire*, I will not abſolutely deny but that the terms of *burning* and *deluge* are of themſelves jarring notions. Yet we know what is meant by raining down fire; nor do I ſee what great impropriety of expreſſion there wou'd be, to ſay *the crimes of the world deſerve it ſhou'd be deſtroyed by a ſecond deluge, not of water, but of fire*. The rea-

DIAL. V.

[f] Reflex. ſur l' Elegance. §. termes mal-aſſortis.

DIAL. V. ſon of allowing theſe or the like expreſſions, is this. Truth being a ſtrict conformity with the object, whatever is not true, cannot be ſtrictly exact. Conſequently exactneſs, in the proper uſe of the word, admits of no latitude, as truth does not. But as we often are ignorant of the real truth, and forced to be content with probabilities, ſo exactneſs is often taken for a plauſible agreement of Style with the ſubject in hand, and with received notions. And as truth excludes not the uſe of metaphors, and other figures of diſcourſe; ſo it is not againſt exactneſs to take ſometimes a larger compaſs than will fall within the ſtrict terms of rule. It is a known ſaying, *Impetratum eſt a ratione ut peccare ſuavitatis causâ liceret.* Nor is this to be underſtood only in leaving out ſuch letters as wou'd cut upon one another in the pronunciation, or changing ſome letters for a ſmoother ſound, or the other methods of avoiding what is call'd *Cacophonia*; but alſo in metaphors, and other expreſſions, wherein reaſon has been prevail'd with, to receive notions which are not exactly true, in favour of a ſweet and pleaſing error.

CRITOM. From the reaſons and examples you give, I perceive ſtill more, you are far from ſo exorbitant a rigour as I began to apprehend upon the firſt news of your diſliking *Callicrates*'s Style. We are now in

in a fair way of agreement upon the art of DIAL. writing, and little will remain to adjuſt the V. difference.

CLEAND. I knew the character of your judgment ſo well, that I foreſaw you wou'd not long diſſent. I was ſure at leaſt, when I engaged you in the diſpute, it wou'd not end in a quarrel. Though a leſſer matter ended formerly in a great war. A fault of Orthography in the inſcription of a ſtatue, cauſed firſt a criticiſm; this came to a hot diſpute, thence followed injuries, and from injuries a bloody war between the *Magneſians* and the neighbouring towns. And as *Emmanuel Teſauro* expreſſes it in his *Cannocchiale*[g], *They fought Barbarouſly for a Barbariſm.*

EUDOX. By the by, that ſort of clinching is frequent with the *Italians*, and ſo common with that Author, that in one or two chapters only of the ſame book, he has; *Traditioni ſono ſovente tradimenti, ogni tratto è un pertratto, preſo & preteſo, giovane diſſoluto & padrone aſſoluto, ſu le membrane delle membra, combattuto & battuto, &c.* Theſe, eſpecially when frequent, are unpardonable. When rare, and as it were caſually incident, they may paſs. For unleſs I am miſtaken, even *Cæſar* ſays, *quos*

[g] Cap. 6. delle figure Ingegnoſe.

DIAL. V. *habuit inſectatores, habuit ſectatores: Cæſar,* who is of all Authors the leaſt pedantick and affected. As commonly great perſons are moſt free from thoſe faults. I wiſh our writers were as free from other faults we have been diſcourſing upon, as from clinches and puns. Tho' ſome are not totally free from theſe neither. But I fear thoſe other faults are partly grown too ſtrong, partly will not be own'd, nor conſequently admit of an eaſy remedy.

CRITOM. While the *Lacedemonians* were victorious, they always affected that ſhort conciſe way of expreſſion which from them is call'd *Laconiſm.* But after their defeat by *Epaminondas,* they found in their hearts to make a long invective againſt him. Whereupon he only anſwer'd, *I am glad I have at length taught them to make their periods longer.* I hope you do not think our new *Laconick* writers are not to be brought to a reaſonable length of Style by any more eaſy means than a ſound bearing.

GLEAND. I conceive the ſtrokes of ſome able pen might effect a conſiderable amendment, and correct not only the affectation of brevity, but alſo the making a kind of *antitheſis* in almoſt every period, and thruſting bold metaphors, and new-coin'd words into every line, with more regard

to

to the ſound than ſenſe. I cou'd name ſome who might go a great way in correcting thoſe corrupt and vicious ways of writing, and by the examples and rules they wou'd give, might make a very effectual advance towards the ſettling and *aſcertaining* our language, and a correct delicacy of Style. DIAL. V.

EUDOX. I am convinced one might find ſome excellent hands for ſo uſeful a deſign. But though I am perſuaded their remarks wou'd be excellent, and their correctneſs of writing a great pattern, and no leſs inſtructive than the beſt of rules; yet I fear thoſe who cry they write to the humour of the age, will hardly be reclaim'd. 'Tis ſaid that *Auguſtus* with a word of command cou'd make frogs leave off croaking. As this is ſufficiently fabulous, ſo, I am ſure enough, that he could not, though *Horace* help'd him with the voice of his ſatyrs, ſilence the impertinent writers of his time. Corrupt writers are like *Fanaticks* in religion, of all ſects the hardeſt to be convinced, and the moſt ſtrangely addicted to their errors.

CLEAND. And as Fanaticks gain proſelytes, ſo thoſe writers gain admirers by the ſame way. That is, by applying more to fancy than to judgment, and to the ſenſes more than to reaſon. Accordingly they uſe

DIAL. V. ſuch phraſes as raiſe the imagination, and ſtrike upon the ear with the moſt airy ſound; where the pleaſure being ſenſual, can be had with the leaſt immateriality of thought; while thinking accurately, and chuſing the moſt ſolid rather than the moſt ſounding expreſſions, requires a more judicious care than their fiery temper will admit. Hence they often make me reflect, that one might ſay of them as Mr. *Dryden* does of *Shadwell*;

> " *He faggotted his notions as they fell,*
> " *And if they rhym'd and rattl'd, all*
> " *was well.*

At other times they make me think of an Author who ſpeaking of one being wrapt in an extaſy, to uſe a greater ſound, call'd it an *Antiperiſtaſis*. Being told this ſignified a very different thing, the harmonious Author anſwered, at leaſt it is a pretty ſounding word.

EUDOX. And by their perpetual affectation of *Oppoſites* (which is the general ſource of falſe thoughts and vicious expreſſions) they put me in mind of a compariſon uſed by *Paſcal*[h]. He ſays, thoſe Authors who to make an *antitheſis* force their words, are like thoſe who make falſe windows for

[h] Penſées de Mr. *Paſcal*, propè finem.

ſymmetry.

ſymmetry. Their rule is not to ſpeak accurately, but to make ſet figures. May I not add, that as falſe windows are ſometimes a kind of an ornament, but give no light, ſo thoſe forc'd figures add ſometimes to the ſeeming grace, but never to the true light of a diſcourſe. And as falſe windows, if multiply'd, are only a great number of arguments that the architect or ſituation was very bad, ſo thoſe frequent figures only make the Author's indiſpoſition be more obſervable. DIAL. V.

CLEAND. Above all, in moral and grave ſubjects, that affectation of Style ſhou'd ever be avoided. For either people will think no real good is deſign'd, and conſequently none will be wrought, while they find you playing with words; or you will make them begin to fear a deſign of ſmoothly impoſing upon them, and they will ſtand as much upon their guard for fear of being overreach'd by your figures and ſophiſtry, as they wou'd for fear of being overſeen in their cups, and overborn with ſophiſticated Wines. Which is a compariſon I remember in *Ariſtotle* [1], in his books of Rhetorick.

EUDOX. When once an ambition of ſeeming ſingularly witty has gain'd the head,

[1] *Caventur improbanturque ut vina miſcellanea & factitia.* Rhet. lib. 3. cap. 2.

it

DIAL. V. it is little reflected how ill that levity of Style agrees with a grave ſubject. And whatever the ſubject is, that ambition has this general inconvenience, that, as *Tacitus* ſays of princes [k], *If they empty their treaſury by ambition, they will ſupply it by crimes*; ſo thoſe Authors who are over-ambitious of appearing witty, when they find their ſtock grows low, are caſt upon a thouſand unwarrantable licences. And if they ſeem to have gain'd any applauſe by this criminal eloquence, (if you will let me uſe ſo fierce an expreſſion) their raſhneſs increaſes beyond all meaſure.

CRITOM. They ſhou'd reflect it is not every one has the fortune of *Alexander*, to make his raſhneſs prove glorious [l]. For my part, I am now ſufficiently perſuaded that great regard muſt be had to rules, and am now reclaimed from the prejudice which before made me apt to miſ-apply a ſaying of our noble *Briton*, *Galgacus*, in the life of *Agrippa* by *Tacitus*. Among other reaſons to incenſe the *Britons* againſt the tyranny of the *Romans*, he ſays [m], *When of a flouriſhing populous country they*

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[k] *Ærarium ſi ambitione exhauſerimus, per ſcelera ſupplendum erit. Tacitus*, Annal. lib. 2.

[l] *Cum præſtò eſſet ubique fortuna, temeritas in gloriam ceſſit. Curtius*, lib. 3.

[m] *Ubi ſolitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant. Tacitus*, in vitâ *Agrippæ*.

have

have made a deſert, they call it peace. Thus, (ſhou'd I formerly have ſaid) when the tyranny of criticks has brought eloquence to bare, and mean expreſſions, they will call it accuracy. But now I perceive there is more to be fear'd from a lawleſs liberty, than from the ſeverity of rules. Eſpecially (ſince there is a rational judicious way of expreſſion, which maintains a great part of its beauty even after a long courſe of years has brought many changes into the language and humour of people) I cannot but conclude, that it is preferable to the airy, the florid, the bold expreſſions, which hardly paſs beyond a ſhort wonder. DIAL. V.

EUDOX. I ſhall not hereupon pretend to determine with all the accuracy of Mr. *la Chambre*[n], in what true beauty conſiſts in general, nor in particular that laſting beauty of a Style. But to give a hint at the main point; it is obvious to remark, that what is beautiful is termed agreeable, and that *agreeable* is a relative term. Farther, that when we ſay one is a beautiful or agreeable perſon, we do not only mean he has a juſt proportion or agreement in the parts and features, but that from this agreement there ariſes naturally in the beholders a liking and approbation, tho' ſome may

[n] Caracteres des Paſſions.

poſſibly

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poſſibly be found, either ſo unreflecting, or ſo viciated in eye or judgment, as not to perceive the beauty. Thus in writing, there is ſuch a proportion of words and thoughts to the ſubject, the author, and circumſtances of both, as is naturally agreeable to every ſound judgment, however ſome readers may be inſenſible to its charms. And in both caſes the agreeableneſs to others, flows from the agreement of the parts in the thing itſelf, and is conſequently more laſting than all beauty that depends on borrowed ornaments.

CLEAND. I remember a compariſon of *Cauſin*, which methinks gives a pretty conception of the difference between the artificial ways of writing, and that you call natural. Take, ſays he [o], ſome curious landskip of woods, groves, hills, fountains, and whatever you can imagine capable to compleat a pleaſing object. It will pleaſe you at firſt more than nature itſelf. The painted birds upon every bough, ſhall ſtrike your eye with a more agreeable view, than to ſee the ſame in reality. But the pleaſure is not ſo laſting. Nature ſoon reſumes the juſt preference, and is more permanent in the pleaſure it affords. It is ſo in your airy metaphorical Styles; they pleaſe at firſt, but the pleaſure is not laſting. And

[o] Eloq. lib. 2. cap. 9.

here,

here, moreover, I cannot but reflect that, however, many will ſtill be judging of Styles as they do of Pictures, by the gayneſs of the colours. DIAL. V.

CRITOM. It is certainly as ridiculous to give all ſubjects the ſame air of expreſſion, as to give all paintings the ſame luſtre of colours. Yet where the nature of the ſubject requires a leſs florid turn, it muſt ſtill keep a beauty and nobleneſs of air that ſuffers it not to fall into deformity or meanneſs. Thus, although natural apprehenſion may be allowed to make the blood of a *Heroine* retire at the near view of a cruel death, from the cheeks to the heart, yet *Taſſo* methinks gives a great inſtance both of the beauty and generoſity of *Sophronia*, of whom, when now tyed to the ſtake, ſhe ſaw the fire juſt lighting about her, he ſays [p], That upon ſo dreadful a ſight, a natural horror chang'd indeed her looks, yet to a colour that was rather white than pale.

E ſmarriſce il bel volto in un colore,
Che non è pallidezza, ma candore.

Perhaps you will think this too nice and too gay a ſtroke of the poet in ſo moving a ſubject. Nor ſhall I examine it in that

[p] *Gieruſalemme.* Canto 2. Stanza 26.

regard.

DIAL. V. regard. But ſomething of the difference between white and pale in her looks, is what reſembles the right change of expreſſion upon particular occaſions.

EUDOX. While we are thus running into the more general reflections which we have ſufficiently conſidered before, I had like to forget a particular inſtance or two of uſing claſhing terms, which may help to a great care of avoiding this fault, which is apt to be very much overlooked by careleſs writers; tho' it is ſo far ſubject to cenſure, that the reſpect we have to great authors will hardly make it excuſable. No one, for example, cou'd ever perhaps venture at bold faults more unblameably than *Milton*; yet I wou'd not be poſitive (tho' I mention this with great ſubmiſſion) that every good judge in theſe matters will allow of his *viſible darkneſs* [q], in the deſcription of the flames of Hell. *Palpable darkneſs* is a conſecrated expreſſion from Holy Scripture, and naturally grounded in the thickneſs of vapours. But I fear *viſible darkneſs* will be no more excuſed than to have ſaid, *how deep a ſilence ſtrikes my ear?* When terms of this kind are kept at ſomething greater diſtance, they are not at firſt ſo obſervable, and conſequently not ſo apt to revolt the reader's mind, if I may uſe that expreſſion,

[q] Verſe 63.

which

which is so common with the *French*. Yet when they are observed upon a second thought, they must needs be displeasing in proportion to their opposition and incoherence. But let me add, that the mere Sound must not make one too quick in this matter: especially in great Authors. Thus I once thought I could give an instance of this kind from *Milton*, and from a place I mention'd before as agreeable and pleasing, tho' not rigorously true, in these verses *,

Now gentle gales
Fanning their odoriferous wings dispense
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
Those balmie spoils.

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Here I fancied nothing but the poetical beauty of the expression, and distance of the words *native* and *stolen*, would easily bear them out, because what is *native* is opposite to *stolen*. Upon a review I found my mistake; and that *native* here is not opposite to *stolen*, but to *artificial*; *viz.* to essences and artificial mixtures: *native* in regard of the flowers and plants, *stolen* in regard of the *Zephyrs*.

CLEAND. However difficult it may be to excuse such clashing terms, I am almost as

* Lib. 4. v. 157.

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much diſpleaſed with the frequent repeating of the ſame terms; not only meaning a conſtant particularity of cadence, or a frequent, reiterated kind of a ſingular jog, but alſo of Phraſes which often return by the careleſs, the forgetful, or the affected writer. Eſpecially ſuch expreſſions, as, like rhimes and compariſons in poetry, are worn out by frequent uſe, and are become poſitively flat by repetitions. Whereupon I remember a friend of mine made a copy of verſes, which tho' defective in the poetical part, yet ſeem to be a juſt explication of the fault he cenſures, and whereof I retain theſe following, in which he alludes to ſome paſſages in particular authors.

Were I the Sun, I'd at a Poet's ſight
Contract my rays, and hide my riſing light.
Ne'er would I ſuffer (no, the fate's too hard)
That ev'ry puzzl'd and exhauſted Bard
Shou'd force the luſtre of the riſing Sun
To finiſh thoughts which Phœbus *ne'er will own.*
Sure Momus *ſoon will tell him with reproach*
His Chariot's now become a hackney Coach.
His foaming Horſes ſpend themſelves in rage,
Whip'd by each hag-rid Fancy of the age.
Some force him this, and ſome the other way;
Some make a longer, ſome a ſhorter day.
One ſtarce begins to whip 'em to the Weſt,
But ſtraight he whips 'em backwards to the East.

The

The day's confounded in a puzzled light, DIAL. V.
And from the morning he begins the night;
Or tires him out by forcing him to reſt,
Tumbling him headlong into *Thetis'* breaſt.
Another makes him fly ſome bloody fight,
And wink upon us with the eye of light.
Another having ſomewhat elſe to ſhroud,
Brings in the morning pictur'd in a cloud.
One makes him ſtartle and grow pale with fears,
Or tells you that ſome whining lover's tears
His bluſhing cheeks ſo gracefully adorn,
Methought the Sun came uſher'd by the morn.
Then learn, when now the Sun is down, his light
Is clipt into a thouſand ſtars by night.
Ev'n Boileau, *whom one might juſtly think*
Horace *had better taught, can make him blink,*
And tire both Sun and us with thread-bare ſtories,
Of carrying round the world Great Loüis' *glories.*

CRITOM. Under favour I ſhall preſume to tell you, that if you had gone any farther, I ſhou'd have been tempted to think that your Poet, by particularizing too far the different ways in which others have abuſed the Sun, wou'd have run him down again by a tireſome courſe of all the toils he and his horſes were ever employ'd in. However (if you will give me leave to ſpeak once more in that *Phœbean* ſtyle) before he goes to water

DIAL. V. his horſes this evening, I cannot but take notice that in all the accuracy you have been diſcourſing upon, nothing has been properly ſaid of grammatical faults.

EUDOX. It is ſo viſible that where grammatical faults in the conſtruction, are either frequent or groſs, there can be no manner of perfection in writing, that methinks it were needleſs to inſiſt upon them. Eſpecially ſince to run thro' niceties of that nature is much too long and tedious a work for converſation. This at leaſt may be here obſerved, that where Grammarians themſelves are not agreed, it wou'd be impertinent to cavil at a Style otherwiſe commendable, or not to paſs over ſuch, as one may reaſonably think cou'd not ſo well be illiterate Miſtakes, as ſudden *Lapſes* of the pen or printer; or to be nibling at dubious points of orthography, as if they were hired to make the *Errata* of authors.

CLEAND. Methinks to be induſtriouſly idle in gathering up all the little faults of that nature, is like *Heliogabalus*'s ſending to gather all the Cobwebs of *Rome*, not with any concern for neatneſs, but for mere curioſity to know the quantity of them, which he found amounted to ten thouſand pound weight. If we were thus to run thro' all the requiſites to Accuracy of writing, we

we ſhou'd add what Mr. *Osburn*[b] with mighty prudence adviſes his ſon, that *in the art of writing, the ink ought to be fluent, and the pen good, leſt the illneſs of that, or the frequent taking up hairs with a pen, ſhou'd put you out of the road of your former ſenſe, and line of invention.* And by the ſame conſequence we ſhou'd examine what climate or weather ſhou'd be choſen to be exact; we ſhou'd, in fine, be particular too upon the conſtitution of body requiſite to the ſame effect. For what was cited above from Mr. *Cowley* in the ſpirit of a poetical image, is true in proſe, that, like the *Halcyon*, wit commonly muſt have fair weather to breed in[c]. And it is true what *Callicrates* ſays, that ſome men can hardly talk ſenſe unleſs the ſun ſhines out; and that if a man would make nice remarks, he might almoſt tell in what *Latitude* a book was writ. DIAL. V.

EUDOX. I ſuppoſe you will accordingly make the Weather-glaſs or Almanack as neceſſary to be conſulted for exact writing, as *Ariſtotle* and *Quintilian*. But to return to the point concerning ſome ſmaller faults in writing, it is obſervable that ſome ſuch are incident to good authors, but not therefore excuſable in themſelves. Thoſe are

[b] Advice, *part.* 2. §. 35.
[c] Mr. *Cowley*'s Preface to his Works.

DIAL. V. not to paſs for right, nor to be made precedents, though they are not on the other ſide to be made capital blemiſhes in the reputation of the author. The beſt of men have ſmall frailties, and the beſt of authors have intervals of a forgetful or haſty negligence. Thus *Rapin*[d] having ſaid, *nothing is more ſmooth than the Style of* Zenophon, in the very next words he adds, *the writings of* Livy *are ſtill more ſmooth.* But this, in ſuch a one as *Rapin*, is mere inadvertency, and not to be mention'd by way of cenſure, but of caution. The ſame I ſhou'd think of what he ſaid before[e], that we ſhou'd write with *that exactneſs of judgment, from which nothing eſcapes which is not judicious.* There is too much of *Synonimy* in the terms of judgment and judicious, for an exact expreſſion; but he has too little of ſuch faults to be criticized for them with any thing of ſeverity.

CRITOM. Notwithſtanding the change I find in myſelf as to requiring Accuracy, I cannot but be very much pleaſed with that fair allowance for lenity due to good writers. In return, I will own that where faults even of that ſmaller nature are frequent, they are inexcuſable. *Gondamor*, you know, uſed to talk Soleciſms out of policy with King *James*. The ſubtle *Spaniard* found the

[d] Inſtruc. pour l'Hiſtoire. §. 13.
[e] Ibid. §. 3.

King

King took a pleaſure in laughing at his expreſſions, and he wiſely preferred the intereſt of his favour, to the repute of his own *Latin*. But I do not ſee how the like liberty may be taken by authors, tho' I fear ſome wou'd make uſe of the ſaying of *Gondamor* for a cloak to their ignorance or careleſſneſs, when he reply'd to the King: "I ſpeak like a King with an uncontrolled "liberty of ſpeech, and your Majeſty like "a Grammarian, as if you fear'd the Rod "if you miſs'd in a Rule." DIAL. V.

EUDOX. I have already ſufficiently told you my mind upon the difference between a reaſonable freedom, and an uncontrollable liberty in theſe matters. As to the faults which we have conſidered, there occurs to me a remark which at firſt will ſeem a paradox. It is, that ſome faults are not faults till they are corrected. Expreſſions otherwiſe faulty and irregular at the bottom, yet are pardonable at leaſt, when it is viſible you did not deſign them for exact and rigorouſly true. A clear Irony, or poetical Notion, or a pleaſant Metaphor, make them blameleſs or agreeable. But when you offer to correct them, they become inexcuſable if what follows by way of correction is not perfectly true and exact. I have here at hand an example from *Balzac*[f]. Writing to a

[f] Entretien. 2.

DIAL. V. friend, and giving an account of bleeding one night, he rubs up the poetical notion of *purpurea anima*, and the ſoul going out with the blood. Then he endeavours to be pleaſant upon the matter of that *bloody ſpectacle, at which*, ſays he, *there were no ſpectators*, and calls his bed *the amphitheatre of that ſanguinary affair*. I know not how far you may approve of this *Balzacian* kind of eloquence. However all this I wou'd paſs. Nor wou'd I cenſure what he adds, *Now I can't ſay I love you with all my ſoul, ſince I have loſt half of it.* The alluſion to the poets taking the blood for the ſoul, is clear. But when he pretends to correct the matter by ſaying, *to ſpeak regularly, I can only tell you that I love you with my whole ſtrength*, I cannot forbear thinking the correction makes it inexcuſable. For ſure he had loſt half his ſtrength, no leſs than half his ſoul. And here, among other ſenſes, that of *Horace* will have place:

In vitium cedit culpæ fuga, ſi caret arte.

And now, Gentlemen, tho' by the fall of the day I perceive we have made a long ſeſſion, yet I will make bold to ſum up the chief heads of what has been ſaid, and what I take to be requiſite to an accurate Style. Clearneſs and Perſpicuity muſt be put with

Ariſtotle,

Ariſtotle [g], in the firſt place: for words were inſtituted only to explain our thoughts. Hence the moſt genuine and proper words are commonly the beſt. Metaphors muſt be uſed with moderation, ſo as neither to turn ænigmatical nor poetical, flat nor childiſh, nor too great or too little for the purpoſe. Phraſes, affected figures, antithetical jars, puns and clinches, words borrow'd with too great freedom from other languages, or from ſubjects commonly unknown, and joining old and new words together, are no leſs to be avoided. DIAL. V.

CLEAND. Pardon my interrupting you to mention a fierce compariſon of *Balzac*, which juſt now occurs upon that point. He compares [h] the joining ſuperannuated words with others of modern uſe, to the tyrannical cruelty of him, who the Poet tells us tied the living to dead bodies.

Mortua quin etiam jungebat corpora vivis.

EUDOX. To proceed: the cadence muſt neither grate the ear by harſhneſs, nor tire it with an homogeneal ſmoothneſs. As to the length of periods, 'tis in their common meaſure as in proſpects; the moſt extended

[g] *Definita ſit orationis virtus ut perſpicua ſit, & ut neque humilis, neque ſupra dignitatem elata, ſed decora.* Rhet. l. 3. cap. 2.

[h] Entret. 38.

are

DIAL. V.

are not the moſt agreeable. Theſe do rather fatigue than pleaſe the eye, and thoſe rather tire than divert the mind and ear. On the other ſide, thoſe authors diſpleaſe no leſs who ſeem afraid of making a period reach beyond a line. How that way of writing can be call'd eloquence, I know not; as I am ſure it has more of ſtart and ſally, than of diſcourſe: eſpecially where the author ſpeaks alone. For in dialogues it may be often connatural not to carry on the thoughts too long, converſation running more upon the ſudden flaſh, than the ſedate management of ſtudied and finiſh'd Ideas. In a word: The Style of thoſe books which are often entitled *Characters*, I never admired in thoſe very books, and much leſs when uſed in other matters. Again; as not only running or jumping, but creeping along, tires one more than walking a moderate pace; ſo the mind is ſoon weary of following thoſe impetuous Styles which hurry it along, and thoſe which in the contrary extreme ſeem to creep; but willingly continues with one of a moderate equal tenour. Finally, there muſt be an inviolable conformity to the rules of conſtruction, and above all, to ſtrict reaſon and truth; all which, I by no means pretend to deliver upon any authority of mine, for I have no pretence to any, but upon what I think is the opinion of thoſe great men whoſe authority has been ever acknow-

ledg'd as unqueſtionable by the conſent of the beſt ages of writing, and not to be reverſed by thoſe bold authors, who wou'd have no rule beſides their own fancy and humour. DIAL. V.

CRITOM. Upon the authority and reaſons which have been alledged, and within the bounds which have been ſet to exceſſes of Criticiſm, I fully aſſent to your opinion; and am perſuaded, the reflections which have been made upon this ſubject, by ſinking deeper into my mind, will make me hereafter frame a better judgment of the books I read.

EUDOX. I began to fear you would ſay with the author of *The Method to Science*, [i] in his long-winded preface, that *Rules ſinking deep into the Soul, become a limb of the judgment.*

CRITOM. *A limb of judgment* is a very odd notion.

EUDOX. So are ſeveral others of that Author, whoſe opinions and reaſons are more unaccountable than his expreſſions, as I ſhall take occaſion to evince whenever you pleaſe we ſhou'd diſcourſe out our differences in philoſophy. At preſent, I fear,

[i] Mr. *J. S.*

we

DIAL. V. we ſhall make the company ſtay for us at *Cleander's* Nephew's.

CLEAND. It is not ſo far, but we may ſtill arrive in time.

A

LETTER

OF

CRITOMACHUS *to* EUDOXUS.

WHEREIN

Moſt of the precedent Reflections are confirmed by the Authority of QUINTILIAN, in an Abſtract of ſeveral places of that judicious Author.

SIR,

METHINKS I ſee you ſtartle at the ſight of theſe papers, from one whom you know to have been, no leſs averſe from long Letters, than from long Styles. Nor could any thing, leſs than the deſire of letting you ſee, how much I enter into your Ideas upon the ſubject of our late Conferences, have drawn me ſo far.

MORE

MORE favourable occaſions than I cou'd have expected, having allow'd me here ſome hours to myſelf, I fell to reading *Quintilian*. He is one of your favourite Authors, and ſince it was upon your advice I began to read him, I hope you will more eaſily excuſe the trouble I preſume to give you, in ſending my remarks upon him.

I have ſcarce inſiſted upon any, but ſuch as confirm the Reflections of our diſcourſes upon *Accuracy of Style*. Of ſome places I have made an *Abſtract*, with a little mixture of *Paraphraſe*. Others I have endeavour'd meerly to tranſlate. You are too well acquainted with the nicety of *Quintilian*'s Compariſons, Metaphors, and whole Turn of his Expreſſion, not to ſee how hard it is to give them their full ſtrength and beauty in another Language. Nor did I ever imagine I cou'd equal ſo great an *Original*. What I have done, was only to imprint more deeply in my mind the principles he delivers. And I ſend you my *Eſſay* to know, whether I have tolerably hit upon the notions you chiefly meant, in adviſing me to read his *Inſtitutions*. The parts of the *Latin* text of my Author, which I have added from time to time, were not taken as the beſt (for that wou'd have been of too difficult a choice) but as they fell to my pen; and as they ſeem'd proper

proper to lead you to the places wherein you might be curious to ſee, how far I have been true to my Author and Deſign.

I was now at the tenth Chapter of the firſt Book, before I thought of penning down my remarks: where obſerving what he ſays of the danger of uſing new words, (though we are agreed upon the point) yet it was, I think, ſomething of my former prejudice to *Criticiſm*, which made me immediately write down what he adds: [a] That ſometimes however, we muſt boldly venture, ſince, as *Cicero* ſays, what ſeems harſh at firſt, will grow ſmooth by uſe. But then he tempers the freedom, by adding, that meer coining of words at pleaſure, will not be ſupported: That ſeveral words, though otherwiſe extremely fitted to their ſubjects, wou'd not be allow'd but upon the judgment of antiquity [b]: That an exact difference muſt be obſerved between words which the freedom of converſation admits, and the accuracy of writing abſolutely rejects [c]: That upon the whole, words are to be examin'd by Reaſon, Antiquity, Authority and Cuſtom; the reaſon of them is commonly their *Analogy* or Proportion, and ſometimes from their *Etymology* or Deri-

[a] *Audendum tamen: namque, ut ait* Cicero, *etiam quæ primò dura viſa ſunt, uſu molliuntur.*

[b] *Jamne balare quidem aut hinnire fortiter diceremus, niſi judicio vetuſtatis niterentur.*

[c] *Eſt etiam ſua loquentibus obſervatio, ſua ſcribentibus.*

vation.

vation. Antiquity gives them a kind of Majesty and Religious Veneration [d]. Their Authority is to be taken from *Orators* or *Historians*: for *Poets* are often excused by the necessity of *Metre*. And when the quantity admits either, the choice of a less usual word is allowed to their humour; or we then take the judgment of a great Author for a Reason, and even a mistake is thought graceful, when we follow some eminent Guide [e]. But custom is, in fine, the most certain rule of words, whereof such only are to be used, as, like money, bear the publick stamp [f]; and still in all these, a sharp discerning judgment is absolutely requisite.

If it were in the present view of my remarks, I would willingly observe to you that what our Author has at the end of this chapter, shews that the antient *Etymologists*, notwithstanding all their learning, could often fall, no less than the modern Gentlemen of that Trade, into very ridiculous derivations. Such are those he mentions of *Stella quasi luminis stilla*; *Cælibes quasi cœlites, quia onere gravissimo vacent*; *Pituita quia per eam petitur vita*

[d] *Vetera majestas quædam, &, ut sic dixerim, Religio quædam commendat.*

[e] *Et vel error honestus est, magnos duces sequentibus.*

[f] *Utendumque plane sermone ut nummo, cui publica forma est. Omnia tamen hæc exigunt acre judicium.*

But

But who, ſays he, may not hope to be pardoned any ſtrangeneſs in this kind, ſince even the learned *Varro* tells you *ager* is call'd ſo, *quia in eo agitur aliqui?* Which is no better than if I ſhould ſay, a Field is call'd ſo, becauſe it is fill'd. And when the ſame *Varro* will have *Merula* be *quaſi mera volans, quia ſola volat*, I think there is no need of any farther inſtance, to ſhew how far the humour may be apt to lead. I dare anſwer for it, you here call to mind the genealogical line of *Diaper* to King *Pipin*. Which is a ſtroke of Etymological Heraldry I cou'd not imagine wou'd be ever equall'd, 'till I found[g] how Mr. *Menage* derives *Jargon* from *Barbarus*, in a direct line, thus: *Barbarus, barbaricus, baricus, varicus, üaricus, guaricus, guargus, gargus, gargo, gargonis, jargon*; and *Laquais* from *verna; vernula, vernulacus, vernulacaïus, lacaïus, laquay, laquais*. How *Alfana* is deſcended from *Equus*, I know not; but the Chevalier *de Cailly* in his *Petites Poëſies* ſpeaks of it in a way that has pleaſed *Bouhours*[h].

Alfana *vient d'*Equus *ſans doûte:*
Mais il faut avoüer auſſi,
Qu'en venant delà juſques-icy,
Il a bien changé ſur la route.

[g] *Vide* Bouhours *Remarques Nouvelles ſur la Langue Francoiſe.* §. Urbanité.

[h] *Maniere de Penſer. Dial.* 2.

Which verſes, I did but juſt think of, as I lately enter'd into one of the walks here, which you ſay are made for the Muſes, when immediately I engliſh'd them thus:

Yes: to be ſure, 'tis as you ſay:
Alfana *muſt from* Equus *come.*
But grant that trotting far from home,
Has ſtrangely chang'd him on the way.

Now, Sir, to return to what is more for my preſent purpoſe. *Quintilian* takes notice in the beginning of the eleventh chapter, that old words, beſides the authority of age, have the grace of novelty, when reſumed again after ſome interval of diſuſe; and therefore carry with them both a kind of antient majeſty and new delight[1].

But, that moderation muſt be had not to uſe them frequently, and be remarkable in them. Becauſe nothing is more deteſtable than affectation. *Quia nihil eſt odioſius affectatione.* Nor muſt they be too obſolete, and brought down too far from the days of yore; or ſuch as are quite obliterated by time, and laid in oblivion, and ſcarce underſtood by the learneded Antiquaries. However ſome antient words are conſecrated by Religion, and it would be

[1] *Et authoritatem antiquitatis habent; & quia intermiſſa gratiam novitati ſimilem parant.*

almoſt

almoſt heterodox or prophane, not to prefer them to others. *Sed illa mutari vetat Religio, & conſecratis utendum eſt.* Yet perſpicuity being the firſt quality of a perfect Style, how vicious muſt that be, which ſtands in need of an interpreter? Let this be then the rule, that of old words, the neweſt are the beſt, and of new ones the oldeſt [k].

MUCH of the ſame moderation holds in authority. For tho' one might think him ſecurely blameleſs, who takes words from great Authors, yet it is to be conſider'd what they have eſtabliſh'd, and not only what they have practiſed in thoſe times [l], but certainly would not, if they lived in theſe. *Quæ nec ipſi jam dicerent.*

AS to cuſtom, he gives an excellent caution (Chap. 12.) that it is to be conſider'd, and well agreed on, what deſerves that name. Becauſe, ſays he, if that be called cuſtom which moſt people do, it will prove a dangerous Rule, no leſs of words than of manners. For ſince when are men grown ſo good, that what is beſt is moſt univerſally liked? Hard drinking, for example, and other licentious practices,

[k] *Ergo novorum optima erunt maximè vetera; & veterum, maximè nova.*

[l] *Multùm refert non ſolum quid dixerint, ſed etiam quid perſuaſerint.*

are common; but ſo contrary to Reaſon, that they cannot deſerve the name, or have the credit of cuſtom. Accordingly, every corrupt way of expreſſion, tho' commonly uſed, muſt not paſs for an eſtabliſhed cuſtom. For the vulgar commonly ſpeak the worſt, and often applaud too, in the wrong place. Whence, in matter of expreſſion the agreement of the learned, and in point of manners, the conſent of the virtuous, is what alone ſhould paſs for cuſtom [m].

THIS caution, *Eudoxus*, I preſume you will like the more, becauſe ſo oppoſite to their cant, who ever talk of writing to the humour of the age; which will be often found no leſs viciated in writing, than rebellious, immoral, and irreligious in practice.

MY Author's remarks (Chap. 13*th*,) upon Orthography, and little grammatical Niceties, are ſomething out of my way, except the concluſion; where he ſays, that altho' too much trifling in the matter is to be avoided, yet it is folly to pretend, that Accuracy in ſuch minute points, is a clog to readineſs and ſharpneſs of wit, and ſublimeneſs of expreſſion. For tho' what he ſomewhere calls *moleſtiſſima diligentiæ per-*

[m] *Conſuetudinem ſermonis vocabo conſenſum eruditorum; ſicut vivendi, conſenſum bonorum.*

verſitas,

verſitas, and what here he terms anxieties and mere cavilling, he owns may break or mince a genius, and work it into meanneſs[n]; yet he adds, that ſince *Cicero*, *Cæſar*, and *Meſſala* were ſo diligent in obſerving and recommending nicety in theſe minute matters, we muſt conclude they are to be taken in the way to learning, but not to take one up[o].

I cannot but think it worth remarking from the following Chapter (14*th*,) that to raiſe the mind to a nobleneſs of thought, and ſublimeneſs of expreſſion, he recommends reading of *Heroick* verſe: That *Tragedies* help, and *Lyricks* nouriſh the ſame: That from thence is drawn a grandeur of ſpirit and life, and the beſt tincture. Provided we take not only the nobleſt Authors, but the pureſt places. Leſt in *Horace*, for example, and ſeveral of the *Greek* Authors, innocence and purity ſhould be loſt in ſearching elevation of thought[p].

THEN he proceeds to obſerve, that the Antients, though they had more wit than art, *quanquàm plerique plus ingenio quàm*

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[n] *Nec ipſe ad extremam uſque anxietatem & cavillationes deſcendendum, atque in his ingenia concidi & comminui credo.*

[o] *Non obſtant hæ diſciplinæ per illas euntibus, ſed circa illas hærentibus.*

[p] *Sublimitate Heroici carminis aſſurgat animus, & ex magnitudine rerum ſpiritum ducat, & optimis imbuatur*, &c.

arte valuerunt, are the beſt models, and ſingularly uſeful in teaching the true gravity of words in their Tragedies, and the moſt genuine elegancy of them in their Comedies. Beſides that the whole *Oeconomy* and management, is better, more reaſonable, and more exact in them, than in moſt of the modern, who think there is no beauty nor ſtrength of eloquence but in Sentences, in whatever work. *Qui omnium operum ſolam virtutem ſententias putaverunt.* From thoſe a kind of ſacred and manly eloquence is to be had, while modern Authors are diſſolved into all the luxuries of Rhetorick, and all the vices of a ſoft, effeminate licentiouſneſs of Style, as of life[q].

As we are not always equally in the ſame humour of writing down, even what we equally like in the Authors we read; ſo I was eaſy to perſuade myſelf that from this place, till the 3*d* Chap. of the 2*d* Book, little or nothing occurr'd proper to my preſent deſign. But here, I could not but reflect, that the ſame reaſons he gives for ſetting young men immediately to the beſt maſters, tho' others, leſs able, might ſeem more eaſy, and leſs apt to frighten with the ideas of too great a perfection, at the

[q] *Quando nos in omnia deliciarum genera, vitiaque dicendi quoque genere defluximus.*

firſt

firſt entrance upon learning[r], or more willing to condeſcend to the very firſt grounds; that the ſame reaſons, I ſay, hold for aiming from the very firſt tryal, at the perfecteſt Style.

IN effect, I ſhould think, as he ſays, it is not hard to evince how important it is to begin with the beſt, and how difficult it is to correct any of thoſe vicious methods of writing, which are taken in the firſt tincture. For then a double labour will be neceſſary; one of learning the right, and the other, far harder, for unlearning the wrong[s]. To which purpoſe he tells, that *Timotheus*, a great maſter of Muſick, required of ſuch as came to his ſchool after they had began in any other, double as great a ſalary as of thoſe who had learnt nothing before of any one elſe.

AMONG other reaſons to the ſame purpoſe, which I here omit (for it wou'd be much too long a work to mark all I find inſtructive in this excellent Author) he gives this; that the beſt are moſt natural and clear, which are the main qualities of eloquence. Whereas commonly thoſe of leſs capacity, ſtrive to look big; as the leaſt

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[r] *Cum mediocritas ad imitationem facilior ſit, & ad ſuſcipiendas elementorum moleſtias minus ſuperba.*

[s] *Geminatum onus & quidem dedecendi gravius quàm docendi.*

fellows are moſt for ſtrutting and ſtanding a-tip-toe, and the weakeſt are moſt for threatning[t]. And I take it, ſays he, for a principle, that all vicious, ſwelling, jingling, tinkling expreſſions, proceed from weakneſs, not from ſtrength of genius; as a bloated and ſwelling body argues an infirm, not a ſtrong conſtitution. And then too, as thoſe who leave the high road are apt to loſe themſelves, ſo the worſt of Authors are ſooneſt loſt in the obſcurity of wandring notions and ſingularity of turns[u].

A GREAT allay to the apprehenſions of too much ſeverity in the Accuracy he requires from the firſt endeavours of Style, is what he delivers in ſeveral expreſſive compariſons in the *4th* Chapter. Moſt of them are reduced to theſe. That requiring this early exactneſs muſt be ſo temper'd, as not to hinder the growth of a young genius by too much parcimony, or forcing it upon too ſtrong and diſagreeable food; the very way to keep it weak and meagre. Since perfection can neither be required nor expected from beginners; a fertile wit, a generous boldneſs of attempts, a ſprightly, tho' leſs accurate conception, is preferable

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[t] *Ut ſtatura breves in digitos eriguntur, & plura infirmi minantur.*

[u] *Ut corpora non robore ſed valetudine inflantur; & rectâ itinere lapſi, plerumque divertunt. Erit ergo obſcurior quo quiſque deterior.*

to the dry, the ſteril and the timorous ſlowneſs, which is not ſo much the preſage of Accuracy, as the prognoſtick of a laſting Dullneſs. Too much fertility is not hard to be remedied, but ſterility can never be conquer'd. Wherefore I think too great a doſe of judgment in children, is the moſt unpromiſing ſign of a good wit[x]. Where a youthful Style ſpreads too copiouſly at firſt, years and reaſon will poliſh it till it is brought to the juſt compaſs. But if the firſt ground is too ſmall or too thin, your poliſhing and working upon it will only pierce it thro', and wear it away[y]. Dryneſs of Style is as bad for young wits, as an arid ſoil for young plants. And it is to be fear'd thoſe who are too much for curbing the ſallies of a youthful pen, miſtake leanneſs for health, and weakneſs for judgment, and will make them both mean and deſponding, by filling them with apprehenſions, 'till they come to never venture at any thing, by fearing every thing[z]. Caution is however to be had with beginners, ſo to commend their wit, as not to deceive their judgment. *Et ingenio gaudebant, & non fallebantur judicio.*

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[x] *Illa mihi in pueris natura minimum ſpei dabit, in qua ingenium judicio præſumitur.*

[y] *Si ab initio tenuem nimis laminam duxerimus, & quam cælatura altior rumpat.*

[z] *Et quod maximè nocet, dum omnia timent, nihil conantur.*

HERE again my pen ſtopt 'till the beginning of the 12*th* Chapter, which caſt me into reflections upon the prejudices which lately inclined me to join with thoſe who, as *Quintilian* ſays, would be apt to deſpiſe and ridicule his diligence in laying down the rules of art, contenting themſelves with nature, and the vulgar methods of eloquence; and urging the authority of a great orator, who being ask'd what was ſuch and ſuch a figure of *Rhetorick*, anſwer'd, I know not; but if they are to the purpoſe, they are in my oration [a].

TO remove this common prejudice, he gives in the 13*th* Chapter, ſeveral reaſons why ſuch Authors as are either ignorant or contemners of rules, are generally thought the moſt witty. Among others, ſome are theſe: That moſt things are apt to ſeem ſtronger when rough, than when poliſh'd; and more numerous when looſe, or ſpread at random, than when collected into order: That the affinity between ſome virtues and vices, makes raſhneſs be eaſily miſtaken for courage, and the prodigal for generous: That bold orators pleaſe by the fate of bold banterers, while men are apt to be moſt pleaſed to hear from others what they

[a] *Neſcire ſe quidem, ſed ſi ad rem pertinerent, eſſe in ſuâ declamatione.*

wou'd

wou'd not venture to ſay by themſelves[b]: (Where, by the by, if we are pleaſed with the danger they run, it is a greater argument of our malignity, than of their wiſdom:) That it can hardly happen, but one who is always running too high, muſt now and then meet with ſomething that is great: That often they gain the repute of wits by ſaying all that occurs, while accurate Authors are confined to choice: That, in fine, the leaſt ſparks appear with a remarkable diſtinction in the darkneſs of all things round; which was the compariſon of *Tully* in the caſe[c]. He grants however, that one muſt own, the rigour of rules takes ſomething away; but that it is like the file, which only takes off the droſs and roughneſs, and poliſhes rather than leſſens. *Eo ſolo minus eſt quod litteræ* (or *lituræ*) *perpolierunt, quo melius.*

UPON the whole, in writing, as in the delivery, the moderation and reſerve which is moſt agreeable to every ſubject, and every prudent judge, is certainly preferable to thoſe who in the pulpit bawl, or bellow every thing out with a world of buſtling, puffing, ſtamping, thumping, and ſtrange fury of agitation: Tho', as he farther obſerves, theſe tumultuous orators, who miſ-

[b] *Libentiſſime homines audiunt quæ dicere ipſi noluiſſent.*

[c] *Ut lumina non inter umbras, quemadmodum* Cicero *ait, ſed plane inter tenebras clariora ſunt.*

take

take violence for ſtrength (*hanc vim appellant, quæ eſt potius violentia*) often prevail much with the vulgar.

THAT one ſhou'd not hence conclude he carries the precepts of art to an extreme rigour, he ſets its proper bounds in the following 14*th* Chapter. Immediately he obſerves, that it muſt not be thought all the common precepts of eloquence, muſt be obſerv'd alike in all occaſions. A General cannot always follow the ſame uniform method of drawing up his army, ever in the ſame order of front and wings. It muſt change according to the nature of the place, the intercourſe of rivers, the ſituation of woods, the falls and riſings of the unequal ground, and the nature of the enemy and his attack. Sometimes he muſt even feign a flight [d]. 'Tis the ſame, ſays he, in Styles. For here too, ſometimes you muſt ſeem to run from the ordinary engagement of Rules.

HE adds another compariſon, drawn from the change of dreſs, garb, and air in pictures or ſtatues; wherein nothing is leſs agreeable than an uniform ſtiffneſs of poſture. *A ſummis ad ima rigens opus.* For variety of figures is what makes the beauty of *Oratory*, no leſs than of thoſe

[d] *Nonnunquam etiam terga dare, diſſimulatâ fugâ, proderit.*

other

other arts[e]. But neither in theſe, nor in thoſe, muſt any unnatural contorſion be allow'd.

THEN he farther warns you, that ſome things are always to be convey'd out of ſight. The whole face, ſays he, is the main beauty of a picture. But *Apelles*, to hide the deformity of *Antigonus*'s eye, painted him ſide-ways. Nor muſt that only be hid which ought not, but alſo what cannot be fully expreſs'd. *Sive oſtendi non debent, ſive exprimi pro dignitate non poſſint.* Thus in the celebrated piece of *Iphigenia*, *Timantes* having expreſs'd a deep grief in *Chalcas*, a deeper in *Ulyſſes*, and all that Art cou'd reach in *Menelaus*, the whole ſtretch of affections being now exhauſted, *conſumptis affectibus*, he cover'd her father's face with a veil, leaving to every one's thoughts to draw out, what the pencil could not do. Whereupon he infers, there is no tying one to univerſal, perpetual rules. That much leſs however, muſt young men think their buſineſs ſecure, when they have learnt ſome ſhort book of eloquence, and the *Technical* parts of Rhetorick, as ſo many inviolable decrees. Since ſometimes the ſtraight road, other times the circuit is the better way: And when the fire obſtructs

[e] *Gratiam & delectationem afferunt figuræ, quæque in ſenſibus, quæque in verbis.*

the

the door, over the wall muſt be your paſſage. *Si Janua tenebitur incendio, per parietem exibimus.*

CERTAINLY, Sir, you think I deſign a volume by following my Author at this particular rate. But to diminiſh your fears and my labour, I ſhall here fairly leap over the remainder of this ſecond book, and the five following, wherein he deſcends chiefly to the particulars of Rhetorick, with reference to publick orators, in the cauſes of the Bar of thoſe times. For tho' he has ſeveral things which might enter into my deſign, yet I thought they might be paſs'd over, as ſufficiently comprehended in the precedent, or the following remarks, which I begin from the 2*d* Chapter of the eighth Book.

HERE ſpeaking of perſpicuity, he tells you of a maſter of Rhetorick (perfectly like the man you ſpoke of, that admir'd the unintelligible preacher) and gives *Livy*'s authority for it, that he uſed to repeat often to his ſcholars, to darken and obſcure their Style; and wou'd frequently give this wonderful praiſe: *That indeed was excellent, for I my ſelf cou'd not underſtand it.* And he takes notice it was grown the opinion of many, that he wrote the beſt, who ſtood

moſt

moſt in need of an interpreter[t]. Where he gives the ſame reaſon which was mention'd from *Elizalde*, that ſome love obſcure Authors for the pleaſure of applauding their own wit, in taking all they underſtand in them, for their own meer invention. *Acumine ſuo delectantur, & gaudent non quaſi audiverint, ſed quaſi invenerint.* But, ſays he, let us ever think the main beauty of diſcourſe conſiſts in being clear, in propriety of words, in their connatural order, in not drawing them on too long, and in which nothing is wanting, nothing ſuperfluous, and ſuch as conſequently the illiterate will underſtand, and the learned approve[u].

GIVE me leave, *Eudoxus*, to add, that I cannot but think appearing in publick in an obſcure Style, is like making a viſit in a mask, and ending it without being known. Such viſits are rather affronts, than civilities; and ſuch books are rather an injury, than a pleaſure done to the publick. One that has no mind to be known, may ſtay at home, and be concealed without being impertinent. Let then the rule be *Quintilian's*, not only to write ſo that you may be underſtood, but ſo that you cannot be otherwiſe. *Quare non ut intelligere poſſit,*

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[t] *Ut id jam demum eleganter & exquiſitè dictum putent, quod interpretandum ſit.*

[u] *Ita ſermo & doctis probabilis, & planus imperitis erit.*

ſed

ſed ne omnino non poſſit non intelligere curandum eſt.

THE next Chapter (3*d*,) of *Ornaments*, is very long in my Author. I ſhall abridge it into the following abſtract.

THE true ornaments of diſcourſe add to it's efficacy and ſtrength. They bear away the attention and aſſent of the audience, and carry an irreſiſtible approbation; while we eaſily believe what we hear with pleaſure, and attend to with delight. And tho' meer flaſhy Styles are extremely vicious, yet there are ſome flaſhes which are to them what they are to thunder, which wou'd move us leſs, if beſides the ſtroke, it aſtoniſh'd us not with the flaſh [h].

BUT the ornaments muſt be manly, not effeminate; and let the colour be from the blood, not from paint. I wou'd not therefore have the finical, gimp Authors, think I am an enemy to the graces and beauties of Style: I do not deny but theſe muſt be had, but I deny they have them [i]. Nor will I think that is the beſt ground which bears flowers without fruit, or like better to have it all full of myrtles, and other pleaſing trees, but void of the olive and the vine. If

[h] *Fulmina ipſa non tam nos confunderent, ſi vis eorum tantum, non etiam ipſe fulgor timeretur.*

[i] *Non nego hanc eſſe virtutem, ſed illis eam non tribuo.*

all

all were turn'd to pleaſing gardens, we ſhou'd loſe the pleaſure even of the eye, in wanting the neceſſaries for life; and if all Eloquence were run into ornaments, Reaſon wou'd be no leſs to ſeek. More ground muſt be allow'd to corn, than flowers; and more room in Style, to ſolidity than to flouriſh. Olive-trees muſt be more numerous than myrtles: yet even thoſe I will range into a method and order, which will be both pleaſing and profitable. Thus they ſhall draw more equally the vital juice from the earth, and not entirely loſe one part of it, while they exhauſt another. *Ut terræ ſuccum æqualiter trahant.* I will lop my fruit-trees too, and thus they ſhall riſe in a more pleaſing ſhape, and a more vigorous, and fruitful growth. In a word, a compact Style, and bound in with rules, is both more graceful and more active: which *Quintilian* expreſſes here in a jockey compariſon (which to one of your humour, muſt not be omitted) from horſes, to whom the girths add both ſwiftneſs and grace. *Decentior equus cujus aſtricta ſunt ilia, ſed idem velocior.*

SOON after he proceeds to tell you, that altho' the ornaments of Style, chiefly conſiſt in transfer'd terms; and the perſpicuity of it, in proper words; yet we muſt know, nothing can be a true ornament which is

improper[k]. But then of proper words, which are exactly or almoſt *ſynonymous*, ſome are more modeſt, or more ſublime, or more ſmooth, or more lively, or more harmonious than others; and again by the different combinations, have more or leſs of theſe ſeveral qualities. The art then conſiſts in diſtinguiſhing which are to be choſen. In fierce ſubjects, a harſhneſs and ſeverity of terms is moſt proper, and conſequently moſt beautiful[l]. Where nothing of ſome ſuch reaſon hinders, the moſt harmonious and ſounding words are moſt ornamental; and as for dirty, baſe kind of terms, they muſt never have place in a polite Author. *Nec ſordidis unquam in erudita oratione locus.*

THEN it muſt be remember'd, that what wou'd be magnificent in one place, wou'd be bombaſt in another. And ſo on the contrary, that will be in ſome occaſions mean and low, which will be fit in others. Now a mean word in a noble diſcourſe, is like a ſpot in a white robe; and a big term in an equal ſubject, is like a ſwelling in a ſmooth body. In ſome again, the diſcernment muſt be made by the ſenſes rather than

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[k] *Sciamus inornatum eſſe quod eſt improprium.*

[l] *Rebus atrocibus verba etiam ipſo auditu aſpera magis conveniunt.*

by reaſon [m]. The examples he gives of this kind, may be perceptible in the *Latin*, but in *Engliſh* I fancy it will not be clear that to put a *Sow* inſtead of a *Hog* (even tho' the other were the newer word) can make any great difference in the elegance of a verſe. It is more perceptible, what he ſays, that ſometimes the very lowneſs of terms, makes the greatneſs of the thought be more conſpicuous: *Vim rebus aliquando & ipſa verborum humilitas affert.*

NOT to be too long in the numerous other remarks of this chapter, I will be content with theſe few. That the greateſt fault in eloquence, is to be injudiciouſly ornamental and witty [n]: Becauſe while others are avoided, this is induſtriouſly ſought for. That corrupt eloquence is chiefly in impropriety and redundancy of words, obſcurity of expreſſions, finicalneſs of turns, and a childiſh playing with ambiguous and tinkling terms: That mixing ſublime and mean, new and old, poetical and vulgar words, is as bad as taking them from foreign languages, and no leſs monſtrous than what *Horace* deſcribes in the beginning of his Art of Poetry: That compariſons being invented to illuſtrate matters, muſt be taken

[m] *Quædam non tam ratione quàm ſenſu judicantur: ut illud,* cæsâ jungebant fœdera porcâ .... *porco vile erat.*

[n] *Omnium in eloquentiâ vitiorum peſſimum. Nam cetera cum vitentur, hoc petitur.*

from known objects: (for, if you will let me add the compariſon, you might otherwiſe as well pretend to enlighten a room by doubling the curtains:) That therefore Poets only, may take their compariſons from remote countries and objects, as *Virgil* does from *Lycia* and the river *Xanthus*: That another great fault of compariſons or ſimilitudes (which otherwiſe make the Style ſublime, florid, agreeable and admirable) is when they are uſed with too much licentiouſneſs, particularly when falſe. Upon which account he diſapproves this compariſon, which he ſays was much admired in his youth; *As great rivers are navigable at their ſource, and vigorous trees bear as ſoon as they are planted*, &c.

In the fifth Chapter, which is of ſentences, after the uſual caution of not running into many of them, or ſuch as are plainly falſe, he declares thoſe are the worſt which conſiſt in puns or falſe applications of ambiguous words °. Then, after ſome other things mentioned in our conferences, he takes notice that they naturally make a broken Style. They cut off the courſe of periods. Each ſentence being a ſtop, each begins a new point, and can have no true

° *Vitioſiſſimum quoties verborum ambiguitas cum rerum falsâ quâdam ſimilitudine jungitur.*

connexion.

connexion. There will be no ſtructure or body of diſcourſe, but a heap of looſe and broken parts or bits. And moreover the whole complexion, as it were, of the Style, tho' otherwiſe clean, will ſeem full in a manner of ſpots and freckles [p]. He adds, theſe pretended lights are ſomething like ſparks of fire which intermix with the riſing ſmoke, rather than a pure flame; and which appear not where the whole is bright and clear; as Stars are no more ſeen when the Sun is riſen. He concludes, that altho' here and there they are graceful, yet of the two, 'tis better to have none, than too many; and that the roughneſs and plainneſs of the Antients in this kind, is preferable to the licentiouſneſs of the Moderns [q]. But that there's a medium which we muſt aim at between both. Yet ſo that our firſt care be to avoid the exceſs, leſt pretending to be better than thoſe plain Authors, we ſhould only be unlike them. *Prius tamen ſit vitiis carere; ne dum volumus eſſe meliores veteribus, ſimus tantùm diſſimiles.*

THE ſixth Chapter is of *Tropes*. He begins with *Metaphors*, which he calls the moſt frequent and beautiful of *Tropes*. We

[p] *Prater hoc etiam color ipſe dicendi, quamlibet clarus, multis tamen ac velut variis maculis conſpergitur.*

[q] *Et ſi neceſſe ſit, veterem illum horrorem dicendi malim quam iſtam novam licentiam.*

have been ſo particular upon this head, that I will only mention ſome few of his Remarks and Examples. As *Firſt*, That the moſt ſublime, but the moſt bold and dangerous, are when we give an expreſſion of activity and life to things inſenſible of themſelves. Thus, *Pontem indignatus Araxes*, is as if the River raged and foamed at the bridge it diſdain'd to bear. *Secondly*, When they are moderate, and in their proper place, they illuſtrate the Style. But when frequent, they darken it, and grow tedious. *Thirdly*, That ſome are mean and ſordid. Hence, tho' *Cicero* calls one the *Sink* of the Common-wealth, it will not be ſupportable to term others the piles and botches of the State. *Fourthly*, That it muſt either enter into a vacant place, or be more beautiful, or more ſignificant, than the word whoſe place it takes. *Fifthly*, That rightly uſed they are a great ſupply to the indigence of language, and to the hard fate by which we ſeldom dare create new words, while many of the old are loſt.

He proceeds then to Exaggerations or *Hyperboles*: Which, ſays he, altho' they go beyond truth, they muſt not go beyond all bounds[r]. And that nothing leads more eaſily to falſe eloquence: that when exceſ-

[r] *Ultra fidem, non tamen ultra modum.*

ſive,

ſive, they cauſe laughter, which if ſeaſonable, is call'd genteel pleaſantry, otherwiſe it's term'd folly[s]. That this Trope is frequently uſed even by the moſt illiterate and common people, by that natural deſire we have to make things greater than they are or leſſer, being never content with them as they are in themſelves. *Quod Naturâ eſt omnibus, augendi res vel minuendi cupiditas inſita, nec quiſquam vero contentus eſt.*

I haſten from hence to the third Chapter of the ninth Book, where he immediately obſerves, that all writing in his days, was become meer figure, if compared with the antient methods. *Penè jam quidquid loquimur figura eſt.* Whereas, ſays he, figurative expreſſions, when moderately uſed, give the Style as it were a ſweeter reliſh, but by frequent uſe they loſe even that of variety. Tho' ſome are ſo received, that they ſcarce bear the name of figures, and the ear is ſo uſed to them as hardly to remark their frequent occurring. Others more remote from vulgar uſe, and therefore commonly more noble, as they ſtrike the ear by their novelty, ſo they eaſily cloy with their plenty[t]: eſpecially when it is viſible they were

[s] *Si aptus eſt, urbanitatis: ſin aliter, ſtultitiæ nomen aſſequitur.*

[t] *Ut novitate aurem excitant, ita copiâ ſatiant .... cum ſe ex omnibus latebris extractas, congeſtaſque declarant.*

not obvious to the Author, but ſought for, and dragg'd out of hidden corners, and heap'd up with anxious care.

I muſt not omit, tho' I omit many others, his remark upon puns. He declares them to be generally pitiful even in Jeſts. *Quod etiam in jocis frigidum.* And as for what is often near a-kin to them, that is, playing with likeneſs of ſounds, or reciprocation of words, or circling of expreſſions round into the ſame terms, or whatever you pleaſe to call it; he gives ſeveral examples, proper to the *Latin* tongue. One however, with a little change, will ſhew the nature of them in *Engliſh*. Thus it might be ſaid of a Glutton, that *he rather lives to eat, than eats to live.* But certainly it is clear, that even thoſe who like ſuch turns the moſt, ſhou'd grant they are putid, and childiſh, when frequent or affected, or forced; eſpecially in ſerious matters.

To go through the forty or fifty more different kinds of Figures he there ſets down, and purſue them in this manner, would be too long a work. Let theſe few touches ſuffice.

As in reciting, change of voice, caſts of the eye, variety of geſture, are a mighty grace when rightly manag'd; but to exceed in bawling, ſcreaming, whining, ſtaring about,

about, is extremely ridiculous; ſo thoſe figurative turns of expreſſion, are no leſs deteſtably abſurd, when they paſs the juſt bounds. A Style has it's right and proper kind of aſpect, which as it muſt not be of a fixt ſort of dulneſs and unchangeable ſtupidity, ſo commonly the natural look muſt be maintain'd [u].

HE concludes, the greateſt part of Figures are only to have place where the main buſineſs is to pleaſe and delight. For when the ſubject requires a kind of fierceneſs, or *Atrocity*, and where envy or commiſeration are to be rais'd, who will bear with the impertinent Author that will be angry or weep in *Antitheſes*, or in reciprocal and tinkling phraſes? In theſe occaſions a viſible care of the words makes the paſſion leſs credible; and where art is remarkable, we preſently conclude there is little of real truth. And with theſe words he ends that Chapter.

THE next (4*th* Chapter) which he *intitles* of *Compoſition*, begins with a point which will clear the true notion of *Nature* in writing, and anſwer the general argument of *Antiregular* Authors. For thus we may call thoſe who either decry all re-

[u] *Et oratio habet rectam quandam veluti faciem: quæ ut ſtupere non immobili rigore non debebit*, &c.

ſtrictions

ſtrictions of art and rule, or at leaſt will follow none.

He firſt declares, he would not preſume to write of *Compoſition* after *Tully*, who ſeems to have been more induſtriouſly accurate in this than in any other part of eloquence, unleſs ſome had even then been bold to write to *Cicero* himſelf, that they diſapprov'd the whole method of ranging words and expreſſions.

Nor am I ignorant, ſays he, that now, many reject all care of this matter, pretending the horrid kind of Style, ſuch as firſt flows to the pen, is more natural and manly[w]. But if they mean nature as yet unpoliſh'd by experience, reflection, and inſtruction, the whole art of Rhetorick muſt be laid aſide, and be no more. For in the firſt ages men ſpoke not by rules, or by that accuracy and care which is now uſed to prepare the audience, by *Exordiums*, by entring with inſinuations, by plauſible propoſals of the ſubject, artful placing of the arguments, and raiſing affections. But if nothing could be better than thoſe artleſs doings, we ſhould not change their huts for houſes, their skins for clothes, nor woods and mountains for cities. At firſt what arts

[w] *Horridum illum ſermonem ut fortè effluxerit, modò magis naturalem modò etiam magis virilem contendunt.*

were

were found? What is there that time has not poliſh'd and improv'd? Why do we prune our vines, or weed our ground? Thoſe are the products of nature. *Terra & hæc generat.* Shall we tame animals? Nature made them wild. *Manſuefacimus animalia? Indomita naſcuntur.*

BUT if the matter be rightly weigh'd, we ſhall find, that is moſt natural which nature beſt admits [x]. And then, as thoſe rivers flow with greater force, which roll along in a well-cut channel, than where rocks and unequal banks oppoſe their courſe; ſo much does a connected Style, rolling with its united forces, ſurpaſs the noiſy, broken eloquence. And why ſhou'd they think that art hinders ſtrength? Does not addreſs in flinging the Javelin, make it fly as with more grace, ſo with greater force? Are there not certain motions and ſteps, without which no defence or attack is ſufficiently ſecure in the ring or field [y]?

HENCE moſt able men have always judg'd accurate Compoſition to be of great conſequence, not only to pleaſe, but to move and to perſuade the mind. Firſt, becauſe nothing enters the mind, which ſtum-

[x] *Verum id eſt maximè naturale quod natura optimè patitur.*

[y] *In certamine armorum & omni paleſtrâ, quid ſatis rectè cavetur & petitur, cui non artifex motus & certi quidam pedes adſint.*

bles

bles as it were at the door, which is the ear. *Quod in aure velut quodam veſtibulo ſtatim offendit.* Then, becauſe we have a natural inclination to meaſure, proportion, and harmony. *Quod naturâ ducimur ad modos.* Otherwiſe muſical inſtruments which expreſs no words, could raiſe no different paſſions. Now if there is a ſecret force in numbers and ſounds, it is no where greater than in a diſcourſe. Nor is it much leſs important what turn or fall of words you have in the cadence of your Style, than what propriety and ſtrength of terms you give to the ſenſe and thought [z]. In fine, take any thing which you think a vehement, or ſweet, or beautiful piece of eloquence, ſhuffle it into another turn, diſſolve and diſorder the parts, you will ſee the ſtrength, the ſweetneſs and the beauty will be loſt. Nay, the finer and brighter the words and ſentiments are, the greater will be the deformity when the compoſure is diſorder'd; for the ill placing of things, will appear more by the very light of the words. *Quia negligentia collocationis, ipſâ verborum luce deprehenditur.*

SOMEWHAT after, he proceeds to obſerve, that a difference of compoſure muſt

[z] *Quantùm intereſt ſenſus idem quibus verbis efferatur, tantùm verba eadem quâ compoſitione vel in exitu jungantur, vel ſine claudantur.*

be

be in oratory, and other writings. In that, the method of the Elocution muſt have its proper ſtops, framed to the delivery. Whereas Hiſtory carries on the reader by the courſe of the tranſactions. Yet even letters and familiar diſcourſes, muſt be pen'd with their ſet numbers; and if they flow not with the connected majeſty of orations, wherein each word and ſentence is drawn ſmoothly from another, yet they muſt be free from yawning, as it were, and gaping of the words; which even there muſt fill their true ſpace and meaſure; and they muſt be confin'd to a looſer chain, 'tis true, but yet to a chain [a].

THE three great requiſites in compoſition, are order, connexion, and number. *Ordo, Junctura, Numerus.* In the order, it is a great matter not to clap a weaker, cloſe upon a ſtronger term; which would make the diſcourſe fall, whereas it ought to riſe. Nay, even commonly the order of nature is to be obſerved; and accordingly we are rather to ſay, men and women, eaſt and weſt, day and night, than to turn them backwards. Yet neither this, nor the order of time, muſt be ſuperſtitiouſly obſerved. Eſpecially ſince the framing of a Style is like building, where not always the ſtone

[a] *Ut potius laxiora in his vincula, quàm nulla ſint.*

which

which lies neareſt at hand, is to be firſt placed, but that which will lie more cloſe and ſmooth. Tho' the happieſt ſtructure of Style is where the right order, and connexion, and harmony of the words, fall in the moſt naturally with the thought [b].

AMONG other faults of ill-join'd words, we muſt carefully avoid, ſuch as jar by the harſhneſs of the conſonants, or yawn too wide, or cut too cloſe upon one another by the concourſe of vowels. However it is hard to ſay, whether too great negligence, or that ſolicitude is worſe, by which every defect of this nature is dreaded as a mighty crime. Nay, *Tully* takes notice that a kind of negligence in this point, is pleaſing, by the idea it gives, of a man who is more attentive upon his matter, than upon his words [c].

AS for the numbers, they cannot bear in *Engliſh* the ſame exactneſs as in *Latin*; not being determin'd by the ſame meaſure and quantity. Yet they have their proper harmony, which is not to be neglected. Tho' we may ſay with our Author, it's better to uſe harſh than inſignificant words. Then, as he farther ſays, this harmony is

[b] *Cui & rectus ordo & apta junctura, & cum his numerus opportunè cadens contingit.*

[c] *Indicat non ingratam negligentiam de re hominis magis quàm de verbis laborantis.*

moſt

moſt deſir'd and moſt perceptible at the end of periods[a]. For each ſentence has its proper end, or ſtop and interval; and when now the ear has follow'd on the track or courſe, and as it were been carried on with the ſtream of your Style, it judges more ſedately of it where its impetuoſity ſtops, and gives time for a reflection. And certainly what is deſign'd for reſting as it were, and breathing, is not to be hard and abrupt. But of all faults of this kind, verſifying and rhyming cadences in proſe, are the very worſt[b].

AGAIN, let it be remember'd that this whole buſineſs is ſo to be taken, that the Style which in the very writing ſhou'd be carried fluently on, grow not cold and dull by too ſolicitous and wretched a care of the numbers, which, according to *Lucilius*, wou'd turn compounding into a checker-work, and inlaying of words. And then, ſo it is, that, as in verſifying, practice brings and ſhews the right quantities and number of the feet, at a view, without the trouble of ſcanning; ſo it will, by degrees, give the true harmony of proſe. Wherein moreover the learned underſtand the art, and the unlearned the pleaſure, tho' ſome things in it cannot

[a] *Magis tamen & deſideratur in clauſulis & apparet.*
[b] *Verſum in oratione fieri, multo fœdiſſimum eſt.*

be

be reduced to rules [f]. Advice muſt then be taken from the occaſion and ſubject, and the judgment of the ear muſt decide in many turns, where I ſhall perceive what is beſt, tho' unable perhaps to tell you why, *Rationem fortaſſe non reddam, ſentiam eſſe melius.* But in fine, this is certain, that where the ſubject is ſublime, the words muſt have a noble pace; in the mild, they muſt be carried ſmoothly, and be equally ſpread; in the lively and brisk, they muſt run; and in the nice and delicate, they muſt flow [g]. Even, where neceſſity will have it, they muſt ſwell. Upon the whole; I had rather have a rough, than an effeminate compoſure, ſuch as now-a-days is ſo common, and we daily ſoften more into all the looſeneſs of a dancing Style. *Et quotidie magis laſcivimus, Sybaritatum modo ſaltitantes.* Above all, the ſuſpicion of affecting numbers, is to be avoided. For one that is found in this ſolicitous way of pleaſing, will neither move nor pleaſe. Nor can the reader or hearer believe him, or enter into the paſſions with an Author that ſeems to be angry or ſorry, by ſtudy and at his leiſure [h].

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[f] *Docti rationem componendi intelligunt, indocti voluptatem. Quædam verò arte tradi non poſſunt.*

[g] *Debent ſublimia ingredi, lenia duci, acria currere, delicata fluere.*

[h] *Nec poteſt ei credere, aut propter eum dolere, aut iraſci Judex, cui hoc putat vacare.*

AT the beginning of the next Book (*lib.* 10. *cap.* 1.) after ſome diſcourſe upon *Copiouſneſs of words*, which ſome, by a childiſh and wretched care, think is to be gain'd by making a collection of *ſynonymous* terms and phraſes, whereof they take upon occaſions not the beſt, but the firſt which occur; he ſhews that without diligent reading of the beſt Authors, it cannot be attain'd. Then he adviſes not to miſtake in taking every thing for good which is ſaid by a good Author. Since the very beſt ſometimes ſlip, or are tired with the care of being exact, or indulge to the facility and pleaſure of their wit and humour; and *Cicero* thinks he has found *Demoſthenes* aſleep, and *Horace* that he has caught even *Homer* nodding. For in fine, tho' they are great men, yet ſtill they are men[i]. And it happens that thoſe who will take every thing for law which they find in ſuch Authors, imitate commonly what is worſt (as that is commonly the eaſieſt to be done) and think themſelves like great men, when they have attain'd their faults[k]. Let great reſerve be however uſed in cenſuring eminent Authors, leſt, as it generally happens, we condemn what we do not underſtand. And of the

[i] *Summi enim ſunt homines, ſed homines tamen.*

[k] *Ac ſe abunde ſimiles putant, ſi vitia magnorum conſequantur.*

two, 'tis better to approve all they ſay, than to diſapprove too much. *Omnia eorum legentibus placere, quàm multa diſplicere maluerim.*

Now as for the Authors proper to be read, *Theophraſtus* thinks Poets are a great help. And many, with a great deal of reaſon go into his opinion. For in them you learn the ſprightlineſs of thought, ſublimeneſs of terms, life of paſſions and affections, brightneſs of images, beauty of repreſentations; and that roughneſs of wit which is contracted by the moroſeneſs of other ſtudies, is ſmooth'd and ſoften'd by the vein of *Poetry*, and blandiſhments of the *Muſes*. Wherefore *Cicero* adviſes thoſe who aim at eloquence, to reſt from time to time, and repoſe in the reading of *Poets* [1].

Yet they are not to be follow'd in all things. Not in the liberty of their words, nor in the licence of their figures. Their whole endeavour turning moſt to oſtentation and pleaſure, they feign, not only falſe, but incredible things, with a kind of exemption and privilege, while we pardon them, and even approve their walking thoſe by-ways, becauſe the neceſſity of rhyme or

[1] *Ideoque in hac lectione* Cicero *requieſcendum putat.*

feet,

feet, forces them to leave the high road of truth[m].

THE characters he then gives of many different Authors, ſeem to me ſo finely touch'd, and are ſo numerous, that I ſhall paſs them over, and only mention the nice commendation he gives to *Germanicus* and to *Julius Cæſar*, where he ſays, that in the works of this, it appears he writ with the ſame ſpirit as he fought; and of the other, after having named ſome eminent Poets, he adds, theſe I have named becauſe the care of the univerſe has drawn *Germanicus* from theſe ſtudies, and the Gods thought it little for him to be the beſt of Poets.

FROM theſe characters of Authors, he paſſes in the next Chapter (2*d*,) to ſome precepts of *Imitation*. Particularly that we ſhould aim at the beſt, but not ſervilely following one only Author. Both becauſe there's no coming up equal to one whoſe footſteps you only pretend to trace, (for certainly he that always follows, will always be behind) and no one has all that can be deſired; and moreover becauſe 'tis eaſier to excel than to be exactly like[n]. Beſides that it is mean, and as it were ſluggiſh to ſtop at

[m] *Depulſi à rectâ viâ, neceſſario ad eloquendi quædam diverticula confugiunt.*

[n] *Plerumque facilius eſt plus facere quàm idem.*

former inventions. If the Antients had been content with imitation, as the firſt had nothing to imitate, the latter wou'd have nothing to invent. Since then they have given us an example of inventing, we muſt invent if we pretend to imitate.

BUT then too, let every one examine his ſtrength, leſt he aim too high, or ſtop too low for the true reach of his wit. For ſome things are either too ſtrong, or too different from one man's genius, which are natural to another's, and therefore, inimitable to him. An eaſy wit, by aiming at the *Sublime*, will loſe its own charms, and fail of thoſe. An elevated genius on the contrary, by ſtriving to be ſmooth and delicate, will loſe its own majeſty without falling into the elegancy of the other [o].

BUT the greateſt, and yet the common miſtake in this, is ſtill imitating the ſame Style in all different ſubjects, whereas each has its proper beauty and rules. Some require lenity and ſmoothneſs of expreſſions; others grandeur and ſublimeneſs of turn; this a rapidity and impetuoſity of Speech; and that a calm and artleſs air. And then to move, to perſuade, and to explain, have each their peculiar way.

---

[o] *Vim ſuam perdat & elegantiam quam cupit non aſſequatur.*

FREQUENT exercise of writing, whereof he treats in the next Chapter (3*d*,) is what he assures us *Cicero* had reason to say, does above all things teach and make eloquence. Then he gives upon it these following precepts. Write diligently tho' you write but slow [p]. Seek for the best, without fondly embracing what first occurs. Examine all you invent, and range all you approve. Make a choice of thoughts and words, and ponder the full weight of each. Give them their true rank. Cast the numbers to and fro into several turns, till they settle right to one another; and let them not take place at a venture just as they come. To this effect you must often read over what you wrote immediately before. Thus you will make a closer connection, and the heat of first thoughts cooling by this stop of the pen, you will take new force, and recover new vigour. 'Tis like going back to take a farther jump, or drawing back the arm to give the bow a stronger bent. Yet, when the wind favours, spread all the sails [q]; but with care not be driven too far, or be over-born by yielding too much to a gust, or being too credulous to the weather. All our

[p] *Sit primò vel tardus, dum diligens stylus.*

[q] *Interim tamen si fuerit flatus, danda sunt vela, dum nos indulgentia illa non fallat.*

thoughts pleaſe us at their birth. Elſe we ſhou'd not even write them down. We muſt therefore call them to an exact review, and queſtion the ſuſpicious facility, and running of the pen. This diligence and demurring, is abſolutely neceſſary in the beginning, and it muſt be taken for a principle, that we muſt abſolutely gain this point, of writing at firſt with the moſt accurate care. Cuſtom will draw on facility; thoughts will preſent themſelves, words will naturally occur, the harmonious ranging of them will follow, and every thing, in fine, as in a well-order'd family, will readily come to its proper duty at a call. This is then the great principle and ſum of all: Writing well is never learnt by writing faſt, but writing faſt is attain'd by writing well[r].

ON the other ſide, thoſe who have gain'd ſomething of a ſettled ſtrength of Style, are not to be tied to the wretched ſolicitude of motoſely cavilling at themſelves. Some never think they have been anxious enough, but are ſtill for changing every thing, and ſtill changing it again, as if all that occur'd were certainly the wrong, and the right were always to be ſought, but never found. Incredulous and ever unjuſt to their wit,

[r] *Citò ſcribendo non ſit ut beneſcribatur, Bene ſcribendo ſit ut citò.*

they

they miſtake increaſe of difficulty for the accuracy of writing[s]. Nor is it eaſy to determine whether thoſe miſtake moſt, who like every thing, or thoſe who approve of nothing of their own. Whence oftentimes ingenious young men, ſpending themſelves in the endleſs labour, write nothing while they will always be writing better. Study, but not indignation, will make you improve. Meaning by ſtudy, not meer ſtaring up at the ceiling, or a murmuring over ſome imperfect thoughts, or gaping with expectation of what will come; but conſidering the nature of the ſubject, and examining in a human way, as in other affairs, what every circumſtance of perſon, time and place may require. Thus nature will teach how to enter upon the matter, how to follow it on. For moſt things are fixt and certain by nature, and are preſently ſeen unleſs we ſhut our eyes. Hence not even the illiterate are long a ſeeking where to begin. It would conſequently be the more ſhame that Art and Learning ſhou'd make it hard[t].

THO' I fear I have already treſpaſs'd too long upon your Patience, yet, *Eudoxus*,

[s] *Incredulî quidam & de ingenio ſuo poſſimè meriti, qui diligentiam putant, facere ſibi ſcribendi difficultatem.*

[t] *Quo magis pudendum eſt ſi difficultatem facit doctrina.*

ſince my hand is in, I ſhou'd certainly have given you the trouble of ſome farther remarks upon the remainder of this 10*th*, and the other two laſt Books of our Author; but that the bearer being to ſet out to-morrow morning, and night advancing, I muſt make an end.

YET I cannot end, till, upon ſecond thoughts, I endeavour to give you the character of *Seneca*'s writings, from the firſt chapter, already ſpoken of, where (in the tenth Book) he gives his opinion of ſo many others. I believe you will pardon my endeavouring at it (tho' I am ſenſible I ſhall not reach it's expreſſiveneſs in *Engliſh*) becauſe I imagine it comprizes your opinion of *Callicrates*'s book, excepting one or two little touches which your juſtice and civility will not let you apply to him.

I have purpoſely, ſays *Quintilian*, defer'd 'till now to ſpeak of *Seneca*, upon account of a falſe opinion that runs of me, as if I condemn'd his Style with ſomething even of an envious cenſure: which I take to have happened by my endeavouring to correct a vicious ſort of Eloquence, by requiring a more judicious Accuracy, at a time when he was almoſt alone in the hands of our young men. Nor did I pretend

tend to ſtrike him out of their hands, but I was by no means for having him prefer'd to thoſe Antients with whom he continually made very bold, while conſcious of his own difference of Style, he eaſily ſaw it could not long maintain its vogue, if thoſe others were approved[u]. Nor yet was he imitated by his admirers, who fell as ſhort of him as he of thoſe others. It were to be wiſhed they could be either equal or like to him: But they only took to his faults, and diſgraced him by pretending they wrote like him. He had certainly great beauties, with a fertile wit, many bright ſentences, a great deal of literature, and tho' no profound philoſopher, yet a great oppoſer of vice, in whom many things deſerve to be read for their morality. Tho' his Style was certainly faulty, and full of thoſe faults which were the more pernicious, becauſe ſweet and pleaſing[x]. Methinks it might be wiſh'd he had uſed his own wit in writing, but another's judgment. *Velles eum ſuo ingenio dixiſſe, alieno judicio.* For if he had not contemn'd all natural expreſſions, if he had not ſtretch'd them too high, if he had not affected a ſingularity of Phraſe, and weaken'd the importance of his ſub-

[u] *Cum diverſi ſibi conſcius generis, placere ſibi poſſe iis quibus illi placerent, diffideret.*

[x] *In eloquendo corrupta pleraque, & eo perniciosiſſima, quod abundabant dulcibus vitiis.*

jects

jects by the levity of his turns, he wou'd be now commended by the common voice, not of the young, but of the learned and prudent. But even as it is, by ſuch as have already taken a ſettled and ſounder method of Style, he may be read with the particular advantage of exerciſing their diſcernment between true and falſe eloquence[y]. For he has many things which may not only be approved, but admired; let only due care be taken to pick and chuſe, as it were to be wiſhed he himſelf had done. For it is a pity that a genius like his, did not do otherwiſe, ſince he was capable of doing what he pleas'd. *Digna enim fuit illa natura, quæ meliora vellet, quæ quod voluit effecit.*

WITH theſe words my Author ends that Chapter, and I my Remarks. I have only time to add, that if you think fit to ſend them to *Cleander*, I deſire you, Sir, to urge him to give as good a proof of his converſion from ſome other principles, as I have given you here of mine from former Ideas of Rule and Accuracy, to the *Orthodoxy of Eloquence*, if you will allow me that expreſſion. At my return, we will enter, if you pleaſe, into diſcourſe of our differences in Philoſophy. In the

[y] *Vel ideo quod exercere poteſt utrumque judicium.*

mean

mean while, *Eudoxus*, I can assure you no difference of opinions can lessen the respect and esteem with which I shall ever be,

Sir,

Your most Obedient

Humble Servant,

J. C.

Advertiſement.

I HAVE been urged to join to theſe papers, ſome others, which I wrote about a year after, at the like broken intervals of very different ſtudies. Eſpecially I was urged to add two letters upon *Accuracy of Converſation*, and one of ſome other Remarks upon the ſame book of *Callicrates*, with a particular reference to the Philoſophical Principles he there advances. But theſe letters being about as much as the Dialogues, I was unwilling to double my labour in writing them for the Preſs, out of my looſe papers at this time. If theſe preſent papers meet with a favourable reception, I may more ſecurely venture to let ſome other ſuch pieces follow upon the encouragement. If they are diſapprov'd, my fault will be much leſſen'd. Beſides that many are always for little books, being poſſeſs'd with an old Proverb, *Magnus liber, magnum malum*, that a great Book is a great Evil. In the mean while, to ſatisfy thoſe who may have a mind to know in a more familiar manner the true date and occaſion of theſe preſent Dialogues, I wou'd not refuſe to add the following letter, which chanced, I know not how, to fall into the hands of ſeveral, a little after.

Eudoxus

Eudoxus *Cleandro*, S. D.

ACCLINATA jam dies erat, cum præcipiti ad finem Auguſto menſe, quod facilè, ut opinor, memineris, ad Moſæ ripam deambularemus. Tum quùm nos inopinatus imber, egregiè perplutos, domum coëgit. Itaque interruptus eſt nobis ſermo ille quem jucundiſſimè miſcebamus. Nec per tuum hinc maturatum in Flandriam diſceſſum, colloqui mihi tecum ex eo tempore licuit. Cui meo fato, ſi indoluiſſe me negem, judicent ſapientes rectene fecerim, ut ait ille, ſed certè mentiar. Nam & ſæpè mihi recurſat animo ſuaviſſimæ conſuetudinis noſtræ memoria, & ſubit animum ea frequens cogitatio, ecquid in hoc locorum divortio, uſurpari ea aliquatenùs nequeat. Parum mihi viſum eſt litterarum illud dulce commercium quod communi amicitiæ debito rependitur. Amplius quidpiam, quodque noſtrum colloquendi modum propius referret, planè cupiebam. Quoties itaque per ſtudia licebat, quandam Dialogi ſpeciem meditabar. Tum verò multa occurrebant quæ ego Tibi, & Tu viciſſim mihi dicturus viderere. Et cœpi paulatim aliqua, rerum iſtarum in chartas conjicere. Noſti enim meum ſcribendi morem, ſeu memoriam, tædiumque levare volo, ſeu ſtylum exercere. Namque, ut ait *Horatius*,

Ubi

Ubi quid datur otî
Illudo chartis. Eſt hoc mediocribus illis,
Ex vitiis unum, cui ſi concedere nolis, &c.

Hinc nata eſt hæc, quam ad te mitto, *de optimo ſcribendi genere* Diſſertatio. Eum enim ſermonem proſequor quem iniquus ille nobis imber excuſſit. Nullus dubito quin tu ipſe meliora fuiſſes dicturus quàm quæ hiſce Dialogis differentem te leges. Quod ſi ego a te diſſenſero, erit ea tota diſſenſio ejuſmodi; ut nec vitari pro ſummâ humani judicij varietate poſſit, adeoque nec quidquam peccet in amicitiæ jura. Tertium audies in quatuor poſtremis Dialogis differentem *Critomachum.* Illum quidem probè Tibi notum & charum; ſed qui nobis, quùm hæc olim agitaremus, non aderat. Non quod Tui ſolius ſuaviſſima confabulatio, meum haud expleret animum, ſed quod revera mihi poſteà contigerit multum cum illo, hâc ſuper re, habere ſermonem; ſintque aliqua ab illo dicta, quæ & dici meritò poterant ad hanc illuſtrandam materiam, & Tibi tribuenda non erant, quia à Tuo quidem genio aliena. Tu qui ſoles *meas eſſe aliquid putare nugas*, ſcito me his ad te ſcriptis hoc agere, quod de ſe *Tullius* ad *Varronem* ſcribit, quum ad eum mittit *Academicarum Quæſtionum* Libros, *ut conjunctionem ſtudiorum amoriſque noſtri, quo poſſem litterarum genere declararem.*

Vale.

Kal. Febr. 1702.

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FINIS.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
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PAG. 75. lin. 5. for *deſperate* read *diſparate*, or *unconnected.* Pag. 193. lin. 4. for *aliqui*, read *aliquid.*

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